In the Beginning was the Word: Concepts, Perception, and Human Being

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In this thesis, I argue that humans are differentiated from other animals through a faculty of linguistically-structured perception through which we directly *perceive* things in virtue of their higher-order, conceptually-articulated properties. Yet I also argue that we retain a non-conceptual form of awareness that we share with non-human animals. Through an investigation of the debate between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell, I explore a phenomenology of expertise in order to defend a Dreyfusian view that argues that the experiential content of our practical dealings must undergo a translation if it is to become the content of conceptual capacities. However, although I agree with Dreyfus that our untranslated experience is of a kind that is shared with other animals, I also argue that he plays down the interdependence of conceptual and non-conceptual content in humans. I articulate this interdependence through a discussion of *phronesis*, 'practical wisdom,' as it is used in the debate, as well as by Heidegger. Drawing on McDowell's assertion that our conceptual capacities develop with our acquisition of a language and our initiation into a second-nature 'world,' I argue that our practical coping is better described not as non-conceptual but as *post*-conceptual; that is to say, human coping involves navigating our second-nature 'worlds' in the same, direct way that animals navigate their first nature environments.

In the second part, I argue that this 'world' is ultimately linguistic in the sense that our conceptual experience is drawn from a grammatically-structured perception that Heidegger called *vernehmen*, 'apprehension,' which he identified with *noesis*. This structure creates the object-subject relationship through which we directly perceive entities *as being* objects. Through *noesis*, we experience concepts as *things*, and our capacity to cope post-conceptually with language and ideas powers the exponential creativity of human thought and action in our rich, second-nature 'worlds.' However, the cultural contingency of many concepts indicates a potential discordance between concepts and their experiential source. I conclude that while such discordances are not incommensurable, and that knowledge of reality is not inaccessible to us, we must be careful about the faith we put in language to describe it, for as soon as we conceptualise, we enter a sphere as much created as perceived.

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Concepts, Perception, and Human Being

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any other form for any degree in this or any other university. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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Introduction

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος ~ *John 1:1*

Language is a virus from outer space ~ William S. Burroughs

My thesis is that language forms our world. Over the course of the following chapters, I will examine our experience of the world with the aim of understanding the differences as well as the similarities between humans and other animals. I will argue that our acquisition of language and initiation into a 'second-natural' world arises with the development of a linguistically-structured form of perception– what I will call *noûs*– through which we directly *perceive* conceptual things in virtue of their higher-order, conceptually-articulated properties. I will argue that this form of perception is exclusively human, and enables us both to understand entities as independent objects, as well as ourselves as self-conscious subjects. Yet I will also argue that we retain a non-conceptual awareness that we share with non-human animals, and that we demonstrate in our involved, practical dealings. The difference between these two forms of awareness, I will argue, suggests that there is a discordance between our different experiences of the world which raises questions about our knowledge of reality.

In this enquiry into what is essentially human, I take my first lead from Aristotle, for whom the human being is the *zoon logon echon*, the 'animal with *logos*,' or– as it has most frequently been passed down us– the 'rational animal.' Whichever way we read it, this phrase identifies something particular about the human, some thing or capacity we have that sets us apart from other animals whose forms of life we share in so many ways. Aristotle's definition has heavily informed the work of two thinkers who will dominate this thesis, Martin Heidegger and John McDowell, and so it makes sense to situate our question in his terms.

This thesis, we might say, is a search for the *logos*, for that which makes us human. We find a questioning of the *logos* exemplified today in the debates between John McDowell and Hubert Dreyfus. Here the question is translated as: What is rationality? What is a concept? What are the limits of our conceptual capacities?

Implicit in Aristotle's definition is the thought that non-human animals are not

rational. What remains unclear is whether human beings retain a non-rational relation to the world. Dreyfus holds that we do. He argues that our everyday dealings and expert performances reveal a relation to the world that does not involve language or conceptual rationality. When we perform at our best, we do not *think* in a deliberative way– we just do. There is something animal-like in this description of expert performance. Just as a squirrel runs deftly along a branch, with no conception that it *could* fall, so we dance, play music or sports with seamless actions that a consciously *thinking* mind could only disrupt. Our *zoon* has the *logos*, yet the *logos* does not pervade our every action.

McDowell, on the other hand, holds that the *logos*, in the form of conceptual understanding, entirely pervades the *zoon*. We cannot switch it off and on, acting now in an animal-like and now in a rational way. Being human means being a rational animal. Even similar actions performed by a human and by an animal differ, according to McDowell, as humans live in a *world* distinct from the animal's mere 'environment,' and thus we at all times see the world through the lens of a conceptual schema into which any experience can be placed.

Dreyfus' position draws deeply from his interpretation of the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. Yet at first glance, McDowell's position appears to share more with Heidegger than Dreyfus' does. Heidegger reads Aristotle's *zoon logon echon* as an inseparable whole. Humans are not animals with something extra, but animals who embody and enact the *logos*. McDowell's distinction between 'world' and 'environment' has, through Gadamer, Heideggerian roots, and McDowell's concept of human 'second nature'– the cultural world in which we experience things directly in the light of reason– has many parallels to Heidegger's 'world,' in his technical sense of the structural background through which Dasein– the human agent– encounters entities as meaningful.

And yet, I will argue, Heidegger is not as conclusive as McDowell on the animal question. Heidegger does not make as much of the world/environment distinction as does his student Gadamer, and he describes the animal as 'world-poor' as opposed to 'world-less.' I will argue that his crucial point is that animals lack the *logos*, a subtle difference that reopens Dreyfus' question about whether the *logos* need be present in *all* of our actions. As we have seen, Dreyfus thinks not, and I will offer a reading of Heidegger that supports this view, although perhaps not as far as Dreyfus would like, for I will maintain that what is essentially human remains tied to the *logos*. In

developing my case, I will use Heidegger principally as a source of concepts for describing the relation between language and human being, and as I develop his thought in dialogue with the thinkers and issues at the heart of this thesis, my reading will diverge from many orthodox interpretations of his work. It bears mentioning at the outset, then, that although I aim to provide a rigorous and coherent interpretation of Heidegger's work, my principal goal here is not to give an exegesis, but to adapt and apply his thought so far as it can fruitfully contribute to the questions I am asking.[1]

As is well-known, Heidegger distinguishes between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic'– or better, *owned* (*eigentlich*) and *unowned* (*uneigentlich*)– modes of being. Unowned actions typify our everyday dealings, and I will argue that there are many parallels between these and the ways animals get about in their 'poor' worlds, as well as in the forms of human 'everyday expertise' that provide the basis for Dreyfus' thesis. Yet the analytic of our everyday dealings that makes up Division One of Heidegger's *Being and Time* is merely a preliminary account. And if Heidegger's 'world' is not as close to McDowell's on the animal question as it first appears, he nevertheless builds a richer picture of the human in Division Two, where Dasein's individuation and the possibility of *owning* itself is made clear, opening the way to an experience that is qualitatively different from unowned everydayness.

I will argue that this experience of action– when it is authentic– is only possible for beings who have a relation to the *logos*. As an expertise, it reflects what Aristotle described as *phronesis*, or 'practical wisdom.' *Phronesis* plays an important role in the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, with both thinkers drawing upon it as evidence for their respective positions. The question thus becomes, does the exercise of *phronesis* involve the *logos*? Yet the implications of this question will be more complex than a simple yes or no answer might suggest.

I will argue that close attention to this question will reveal the debaters as respectively emphasising one of two related but separate issues. Dreyfus is wrong to think that the authentic coping which *phronesis* exemplifies does not involve the *logos*, even though he is right that our most basic everyday coping functions without explicitly invoking

[1] Throughout this thesis, when drawing upon Heidegger I refer for the most part to the 'early' Heidegger of *Being and Time* and associated lectures, not only because this is the most directly Aristotelian phase of his thought (cf. Kisiel 1993), but because it was primarily through engagement with these works that Dreyfus develops his theory. At any rate, I subscribe to the view of those, such as Gadamer, who hold that Heidegger's fundamental thinking did not change through his so-called '*Kehre*' into the 'later' Heidegger after the mid-1930s, although lack of space prevents me from pursuing those thoughts here.

it. Meanwhile, McDowell is right to argue that *phronesis* contains the *logos*, and yet wrong to deny the form of awareness that we share with animals, which has him implying that all of our dealings are *phronesis*-like all the way out. For if *phronesis* includes an unmediated perception of the *logos*, I argue that– as Dreyfus emphasises– its parallels with everyday expertise are significant, yet, *pace* Dreyfus, its invocation of concepts means that it should not properly be considered *non*-conceptual, but rather *post*-conceptual. Yet this conclusion requires that we re-understand the *logos* in terms of a linguistic faculty that is in a certain sense deeper than communicative speech, intimately tied to a grammatically-structured, minded mode of perception that Heidegger calls *vernehmen*.

By following Heidegger's identification of *vernehmen* with Aristotle's *noesis* or *noûs*, I will argue that the central feature of language is the perception of objects *as* objects, which we relate to one another through a structure that is grammatical in the sense of Chomsky's Universal Grammar. That is, this mode of perception lets us carve up experiences into isolated elements. Such elements can then be recombined in the way that we merge and move elements of a sentence to create new meanings, a process I liken to the Aristotelian idea of *synthesis* and *diairesis*, in which Heidegger argues *vernehmen* is grounded. I will argue that this form of perception itself enacts the 'breakdown' whereby we experience objects immediately *as* things, but in doing so, we take them from a particular perspective. While I will argue that this perspective is shared in virtue of our being embodied social beings within a linguistically-rooted culture, the sense of contingency that makes our conceptual faculty so creative also implies a disconnect between the concepts available to different cultural communities.

Thus, I will argue that resolving the Dreyfus-McDowell debates will provide us with insights that should improve our understanding of human being-in-the-world. Crucially, I aim to show that our experience is comprised of both a linguistic or noetic layer pervaded by the *logos*, and a more primordial layer in which it is not operative. Dreyfus goes wrong by downplaying just how pervasive the *logos* is for us, while McDowell makes the error of focusing only on that sphere of our lives in which *noûs* is involved. In the latter part of this thesis, I will examine contemporary debates on the nature of mindedness and intentionality in the light of these conclusions, showing that McDowell is not alone in restricting his focus. As I will argue that noetic awareness implies self-consciousness, such a restriction therefore results in a privileging and therefore an identification of the human with the perceiving subject of

the *logos*. Understanding this layer as distinct from yet interdependent with our pre-noetic awareness, I will suggest, offers an account of what makes our abstract and creative thought– indeed, our very perception of the *world*– possible. However, by understanding the movement of this abstraction, I will argue that this same capacity also implies a discordance with the source of our experience.

Reaching this conclusion will involve an occasionally winding path, as I digress from the central debate to provide evidence for the layers I posit, before shifting my focus to the transition between layers, and the wider implications of this shift. At the beginnings and ends of each Chapter, I will give a recap that should help to put the Chapter's themes into the overall context of the thesis, although the hurried reader may wish to skip over these summaries, my thesis should remain clear if we keep in mind that at each stage, however diverse, I am offering a questioning of the *logos*, and its influence on our experience of the world.

Chapter One will introduce us to the Dreyfus-McDowell debate. As mentioned above, Dreyfus and McDowell epitomise two poles of thought about the relationship of the *logos* with the *zoon*, so I therefore take their positions as a starting point, contrasting them to all the better show what Aristotle's words have come to mean for us. Resolving the debate (which in part will mean *dissolving* it, for I will argue that the thinkers share more than they initially suggest) is therefore a preliminary step I take in order to clarify what the *logos*– what rationality, or conceptual capacities– *is*.

I begin by showing where there is agreement between these thinkers over the phenomena that are at stake, arguing that only once we have this clear will it make sense to map on any meaning of concept, rationality, or *logos*. I will show how Dreyfus and McDowell largely agree about what it is that humans do, and both actively promote the idea that a great deal of our cognitive activity extends beyond what has traditionally been limited to 'thinking.' Their disagreement is laid out in terms of whether 'concepts' are employed in this wider understanding of cognition– particularly in that sphere of action that doesn't involve *explicit* use of linguistic concepts, which Dreyfus calls 'coping.'

The biggest difficulty here is that neither Dreyfus nor McDowell entirely agree with what the other means by 'conceptual.' Dreyfus holds that concepts are not employed during coping, since they are for him by definition only available during restricted, reflective thinking, while McDowell insists that the very *potential* for such reflection

indicates that an experience is already conceptual. Thus the bad news is that Dreyfus and McDowell cannot agree on what being conceptual– and more broadly, what being rational– means, and the worse news is that the wider literature contains even less agreement. But the good news, I will argue, is that we can at least find in their debates a starting point, for they share a general agreement over the phenomena that are present. I will argue that both Dreyfus and McDowell recognise two distinct forms of intentional content. Their debate, we will see, revolves around where we understand these differing forms of content to apply. But to begin with, I will elaborate a description of these two forms of content, as they appear in both Dreyfus and McDowell's work, and through accounts of expertise.

A lively debate over the content involved expert action feeds directly into the Dreyfus-McDowell debate by also questioning whether concepts are actively employed during expert performance– something Dreyfus considers an exemplar of 'coping.' In Chapter Two, I will argue that a careful examination of the phenomenology of expertise reveals the same two layers of experience that Dreyfus and McDowell described, which we can use as a basis for a distinction between forms of experiential content. I will furthermore mark a distinction between the phenomenology of 'inauthentic,' unowned everyday expertise, and authentic, owned expertise that will later help reveal the place of concepts in motor intentional content.

As mentioned above, the term 'concept' is used vaguely both in the Dreyfus-McDowell debates and in the wider literature, and rather than getting bogged down in traditional definitions of 'concept,' I will use the phenomenology established in the first two Chapters as a starting point. Based on the preceding discussion, I will propose a preliminary definition of 'concept' that can usefully anchor the debate, a definition which– although perhaps more Dreyfusian– captures the distinction McDowell also makes. Such concepts at its root the possibility of abstraction, of being understood *as* something, as– we will later say– the *logos*.

However, while such a provisional definition may be acceptable to McDowell, he would emphasise his divergence from Dreyfus, since he nevertheless holds that this description of conceptuality is applicable to both layers, For McDowell, our being rational animals means that we already experience the lower layer differently than other animals. Thus, he conceives of that layer differently to the way Dreyfus does, claiming that he remains justified in calling it conceptual since the experience of coping maintains a relationship to rationality that a similar animal experience does

not.

The debate therefore becomes one of whether or not we share that layer with other animals, with *zoa alogon*. Dreyfus explicitly argues that we do, while McDowell– even as he distinguishes between two forms of content– maintains that even if the lower level is qualitatively distinct from the upper, it nevertheless contains the *logos*, proven by the possibility of its exploitation as the content of conceptual capacities. As mentioned, at the heart of McDowell's argument is the notion that something's being just *potentially* expressible as a concept by a rational animal is central to its being conceptual; in other words, the *logos* is already contained within that animal's perception. In order to show that we share one form of content with non-rational animals, Dreyfus must first show that we perform a form of translation on the content of coping in order to make it conceptual.

In Chapter Three, therefore, I will focus on what I see as the essential difference between humans and non-rational animals. I will find parallels in the two layers identified in Chapter One with the two *as*-structures Heidegger describes in *Being and Time*. The upper layer, whose content all agree is conceptual, matches the content given by what Heidegger called the 'apophantic-as' that reveals something "*as* something," and as present-at-hand. The lower layer I equate with the 'hermeneutic-as' of the ready-to-hand. Building on an argument from McNeill, I will argue that this form of content ought also to be attributed to the intentional states of non-rational animals.

In so doing, we also find in Heidegger's description of the transition between as-structures an account of how reflection *changes* the content of experience, creating the *logos*, or as Heidegger would more precisely put it, the *logos apophantikos*. Thus we discover here that the *logos*– that is, conceptuality and experience of the *as*– is bound together with a reflective awareness that is distinctively human. I will thus argue that this reading of Heidegger's phenomenology gives us the resources to show that the two forms of content are different in kind.

The main objection to this conclusion, and the basis of McDowell's reply, is that humans– inhabiting a 'world' or 'second nature'– experience even the hermeneutic content of their coping actions in a different way than other animals, for we are embedded in a network of cultural norms. This reply has many similarities to a more orthodox reading of *Being and Time*. However, I will argue on the basis of Heidegger's

further refinement of those ideas– in which he makes explicit references to animal experience– that this has little bearing on our question of conceptuality. For what is primarily at issue, as has been established throughout the first and second chapters, is that the *experience* of acting involves non-conceptual content.

In Chapter Four I will take this point further, and argue that from the contention that our human world is built through our acquisition and employment of conceptual capacities, it does not follow that those capacities are active in every sort of experience. I return to the Dreyfus-McDowell debate and its discussion of *phronesis*. It now becomes clear that a fundamental disagreement at the heart of the debate is how to understand this *arete* ('virtue'), taken from its context in Aristotelian ethics and applied more specifically by Heidegger. Heidegger's reading has played a large role in Dreyfus' attack on McDowell, whose own readings of Aristotle and Gadamer have given *phronesis* a central role in his work.

Much has been written of the Aristotelian background of *Being and Time*, and one reading of that work sees Heidegger expanding Aristotle's ethics into the ontological sphere. In a similar way, Dreyfus expands Heidegger's ontological project into questions of conceptuality and mind. Each of these thinkers, therefore, interprets *phronesis* and other *aretai* according to their own projects. We must be careful, then, in assuming that these thinkers are discussing the same thing as McDowell, who applies Aristotle to his own post-Kantian project. All the same, I will suggest that the common lineage of these interpretations means that reflecting on *phronesis* offers a synthesis that can help us make sense of the place of the *logos* within coping.

Discussing *phronesis* as it is used by Dreyfus and McDowell, as well as by Heidegger and Gadamer, I will follow Charles Taylor in suggesting that rather than describing purely non-conceptual coping, *phronesis* is better described as *post*-conceptual, which I will define as the navigation of our second-nature 'worlds' in a non-conceptual way. That is to say, while McDowell is right to emphasise that our *Bildung*– our initiation into a linguistic and cultural community– marks an irreversible change in how we come to know the world (and an exponential increase in the number and kind of entities available to our experience), it does not follow that our *lived awareness* of that world is entirely different. Having the *logos* means that we have richer worlds than animals, but this is an extension rather than a replacement of that basic, animal coping.

In Part Two, I will turn my attention to the *logos*, starting with a closer look at the distinction between layers in Chapter Five. In discussing the 'as-structure' in Chapter Three, I argued that we share the hermeneutic-as with non-rational animals, while the apophantic apprehension of something *as* something belongs only to rational animals. I introduce Heidegger's concept of *Vernehmen* as a form of perception that uncovers the apophantic, and is peculiar to humans. I will show how Heidegger equates this form of perception with *noûs*, and holds that it has a particular relation to *Wahrnehmung*– perception more broadly, but with a particular emphasis on truth (*Wahrheit*) in his special sense of *aletheia* as 'unconcealing.' Both Dreyfus and McDowell suggest that 'Naming' is crucial to the transition between one content of experience and the other, hinting at the peculiarly linguistic nature of concepts and rationality (although McDowell, I argued in Part One, is wrong to hold that language– as the bearer of our second-nature– is therefore present *already* in the 'lower' form of content). Thus *vernehmen* should be understood as a *linguistic* perception, where we directly experience the thing as inextricably bound to its associated 'concept' or 'name.'

In Chapter Six I will offer empirical support for this via Merleau-Ponty's analysis of the 'Schneider case' of visual agnosia, where he distinguishes between *Greifen* and *Zeigen* ('grasping' and 'pointing') modes of perception. This is further supported by more rigorous contemporary accounts of agnosics, as well as work by Tomasello on pointing (and its lack) in infants and apes. I will argue that this provides strong evidence that the *vernommen* perception of something apophantically-*as* something is intimately bound up with language. Reflecting back on Part One, the *logos*– conceptual rationality– reveals itself as language; however, language here must be understood not in the sense of a totality of words used for communication, but as that faculty of perception that lets the world be seen *as* the world.

In Chapter Seven, I will argue that this perception should be understood as *linguistic* so far as its content is grammatically-structured, in the sense of Chomsky's Universal Grammar, wherein elements of an experience are organised such that they can be expressed as the moveable elements of natural language. 'Naming,' therefore, marks the experience of intentional content through linguistic (*vernommen*) perception, and therefore demonstrates the change in content that McDowell denies. I then argue that this form of perception, while logically prior to language, develops in tandem with it both on the species and the individual level. On the species level, I argue that human culture forms the niche wherein this linguistic faculty become refined. On the

individual level, I argue that our initiation into a culture (our *Bildung*) triggers the development of *noesis*, which in turn facilitates the full acquisition of language.

Our initiation into culture, however, means that to a certain degree the concepts we acquire will be vary according to the form of life we share with our cultural community. However, I will argue that this does not imply the degree of linguistic or cultural relativism of the sort attributed to a strong reading of the Whorfian hypothesis, firstly because even very culturally-specific concepts are never untranslatable in principle across cultures, and secondly because the greatest *conceptual* differences across communities have their source in the lexicon rather than the surface grammars of languages, and thus the entities in second natural worlds can differ as much *within* linguistic groups as across them.

Nevertheless, our *Bildung* into a second natural world suggests a disconnect from the primordial world of our coping, since we experience the concepts we so acquire *as entities*. Furthermore, our capacity to experience such conceptual entities post-conceptually– coping with them, so that we experience them invisibly as elements of a further task– drives our capacity to think and to deal with increasingly rich and abstract entities. Thus, while language is revealed as forming the rich, second-natural world of human being, it also represents a movement away from an unmediated immersion in the world into a different sphere of being, where our direct experience is of Named concepts rather than the things themselves. This, in turn, seems to imply a pessimism about the ability of language or conceptual structures to adequately reveal reality.

It was against this conclusion that McDowell was motivated to argue in *Mind and World* that our conceptual understanding is not a 'frictionless spinning in the void' but provides us with direct access to the world. My thesis, on the other hand, reinserts an element of vagueness where McDowell claims certainty, although perhaps not the unbridgeable gulf that McDowell attributes to Davidson.[2] For while I will have argued

[2] Although it should be noted that Davidson's actual view is more subtle than the cohrentism that McDowell attributes to him, for his claim that 'nothing can be a reason for a belief except another belief' hinges on his understanding of beliefs and reasons as propositional. Hence, while sensations may be part of the *causal* chain that leads us to have beliefs, they cannot be understood, in and of themselves, as *reasons* (see Davidson 1997, p. 22). Davidson's extended defences of externalism and his concept of triangulation (e.g., Davidson 2001b, p. 200; 2001a, p.105. See also Rorty 2011, pp. 3-5) offer a detailed account of why we should not accept coherentist, much less sceptical, doubts over the external world. This view has many parallels to my own, although I will not have the space in this thesis for a detailed comparison.

that language tends to a disconnection from the world, I have identified in the process of Naming an anchor point where language connects to and arises from our direct experience of the world. Thus, I will argue that the world is not inaccessible to us, yet we must be careful about the faith we put in language to describe it, for as soon as we Name, we enter a sphere as much created as perceived.

Thus I will conclude that to be human is to have language and to exist in the world that it builds. Yet we must take care not to identify ourselves with this essential element. For while the *logos* is the central and unifying element of *human* consciousness, we must not mistake it for the *only* element, nor the world it reveals as the world as it truly is, beyond human being.

Part One

Chapter One
The Dreyfus-McDowell Debate

In this Chapter I will introduce the debate between Hubert Dreyfus and John McDowell. After outlining their respective positions, I will outline their main point of agreement, which will better help us to frame their main disagreement. I will show how both thinkers agree in their rejection of a Cartesian body-mind dualism (even though each accuses the other of perpetuating just such thinking), and in extending their understanding of cognition beyond purely intellectual activities to cover embodied action as well. Their disagreement is over the nature of such embodied activity, what Dreyfus calls 'coping.' McDowell insists that this, like all human cognitive activity, is conceptual 'all the way out,' while Dreyfus argues that such activities involve a non-conceptual form of content. I will argue that a large part of their disagreement stems from different understandings of what it means for something to be 'conceptual,' with Dreyfus restricting the term to the content of reflective mental states, while McDowell applies the term to any content that could *potentially* form the content of such a state. However, both agree, in invoking a linguistic process that I call Naming, that conceptuality is tied to a linguistic understanding. I therefore try to put them onto the same page by leaving aside definitions of 'concept' and focusing more closely on what Dreyfus and McDowell say about content. I argue that both thinkers identify two forms of content and differ over how and when conceptualisation is experienced.

1.1 – *Background*

in which I present the debate, arguing that its core question is the presence of 'strong' conceptual capacities in smooth coping.

First a little background. The debate began with Dreyfus criticising McDowell's (epistemological) thesis that our knowledge of and interactions with the world are always conceptual.[1] McDowell means by this that the knowledge we gain through perception can immediately be used to form judgements. It is in this sense that he holds that we are 'pervaded' by rationality.[2] The point is not that our perception involves making propositional judgements; it is rather that between perception and judgement there is no intermediate step, no translation in content from non-conceptual to conceptual. Our rationality goes, as it were, 'all the way out', and as such

[1] Dreyfus 2005, p. 47.
[2] McDowell 2013, p. 41-2.

McDowell can hold that conceptual capacities are involved even in our reflexive, bodily skills.[3] Dreyfus, on the other hand, draws on phenomenological arguments to show that most of our everyday activities– including our most expertly performed skills– bypass those conceptual capacities that McDowell claims are pervasive. Our awareness during such activities has a content, to be sure, but this content is non-conceptual, and Dreyfus holds it must somehow be translated into concepts if it is to be the content of thought.

As Rietveld points out, McDowell and Dreyfus have many points in common, with both seeing themselves as resisting the old Cartesian duality of body and mind. Chief amongst these points is the agreement that unreflective activity is "pervasively bodily," and that normativity is "always already" there.[4] With these commonalities in mind, the disagreement between the two thinkers becomes more and more apparent. There is no debate over whether or not a baseball or a blitz-chess player's actions are embodied and reflexive, nor about whether explicit *thinking* is involved in such actions– both thinkers would agree in saying yes to the former and no to the latter. What is at issue is whether actors are employing *concepts*– in the strong, rational sense that I will detail below– during these unthought, reflexive actions.

Thus the dispute boils down to the nature of what Dreyfus calls 'embodied coping'. Coping is Dreyfus' elaboration of what Heidegger called dealings with *zuhanden* or ready-to-hand equipment, which is our everyday way of being-in-the-world, distinct from the experience of oneself as a subject and the things we encounter as objects.[5] Although Dreyfus is fond of illustrating smooth-coping with the example of an athlete playing in the 'flow', some of the best examples come from our mundane, everyday tasks. Charles Taylor reminds us that something as basic as walking up a hill involves a great deal of cognitive work that doesn't fall under our ordinary conception of making judgements, or involving conscious, rational thought.[6] In fact, while we climb the uneven steps, dodging the puddles and avoiding loose rocks, our conscious awareness can be entirely elsewhere– thinking about a difficult conversation, or perhaps even engaged in that conversation on a telephone.[7] Thus the question at the

[3] McDowell 2007a, p. 339.
[4] Rietveld 2010, p. 185.
[5] Heidegger 1962, p. 97-8.
[6] Taylor 2002, p. 111.
[7] 'Conscious' may be a problematic term in this context, but despite its potential vagueness, I find it difficult to think of a more specific alternative. What I mean by 'conscious awareness' is the active awareness of the activity one is performing, where one directs one's attention as an agent.

centre of the debate is whether or not embodied coping can be understood entirely independently of conceptual rationality.[8]

While Dreyfus defines embodied coping as "non-mental… non-conceptual, non-propositional, non-rational and non-linguistic,"[9] McDowell maintains that our basic experience is already conceptually articulated, in the sense that the content of our coping experience would undergo no transformation if we were to express it propositionally.[10] For Dreyfus, there are two kinds of awareness going on between the hill-climbing and the phone conversation. For McDowell, there is only one, and the difference in experience lies rather in the directionality of the agent's attention.

Two central terms need to be flagged up before we can make any progress in understanding the debates. The first term is 'concept,' for it is not immediately clear what sense of conceptuality is at stake in coping, particularly over the extent that concepts need to be general, public, and communicable. Taylor argues that we need some 'minimal sense' of conceptuality that is none of these things whenever we talk of an agent pursuing an activity, since coping "can't be understood in just inanimate-causal terms."[11] We recognise the things we use as having a certain relevance, we 'know our way about them.'[12] So it would not seem a stretch to grant this minimal sense also to non-human animals. Dennett claims that all living things 'bring into the world their own good,' meaning that by their very make-up they are able to pick out certain features of their environment as relevant.[13] We might therefore be tempted to say that they bring into the world their own concepts, in Taylor's most minimal sense. At a bare minimum, any animal's survival presupposes a capacity to 'pick out' what is relevant from what is not, although whether we ought to call it conceptual or not is a question of its own.

At any rate, even if we were to call this minimal 'picking-out' conceptual, it would not be the form of conceptuality that is of real interest in the debate, what Rietveld calls "strong rationality," which should be distinguished from anything we ascribe even to higher animals. [14] 'Strong' conceptual capacities are "dependent on language-

[8] McDowell 2007a, pp. 344-5.
[9] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 352.
[10] McDowell 2007a, p. 338.
[11] Taylor 2002, p. 111.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] Dennett 1991, pp. 173-4.
[14] Rietveld 2010, pp. 190, 204 [n.12].

acquisition" and belong to a "linguistic or reflective faculty."[15] For the present, this dependence will be unargued, although the connection of conceptuality to language will become clearer as we progress through the thesis. In the meantime, it is enough to note that both Dreyfus and McDowell are concerned with concepts in this 'strong' sense, which they understand as tied to language.[16] The debate, then, can be seen as over the extent and the manner in which our smooth-coping draws upon these reflective or linguistic concepts.

The second term is 'content.' As Crane notes, both Dreyfus and McDowell reject the idea of a 'bare Given,' and in this way their debate raises similar issues to those in contemporary debates over the content of perceptual experience.[17] However, like 'concept,' 'content' is used by both Dreyfus and McDowell in ways that occasionally differ not only from each other, but from how that term is also used in the wider literature. It is worth taking a moment then, before we get too deeply into their respective accounts, to take a brief look at some differing conceptions of content.

1.1.1 – *Content*

in which I summarise different understandings of 'content' and articulate the sense of content that is at stake in the debate.

'Content,' Schellenberg notes, is a theoretical term that has been used to describe anything from basic informational states to cognitively-rich belief states.[18] She notes that there are very few uncontroversial characteristics of content, but that there is a wide consensus that there is at least some kind of correspondence between content and accuracy conditions. On this view, content either "determines" accuracy conditions, because we can ask of any state (or thought, expression, perception, and so on) whether things are as they are represented to be, or it is "identified" with accuracy conditions, if the accuracy conditions specify the possible conditions that must be realised for the state (thought/expression/perception) to be accurate.[19]

Content, understood this way, signifies "the conditions under which the experience is accurate."[20] Being assessable for accuracy, they are widely held to be propositional

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15 *Ibid*, p. 190.
16 McDowell 2007a, p. 348; Dreyfus 2007a, pp. 353-4.
17 Crane 2013, p. 232.
18 Schellenberg 2013, p. 273.
19 *Ibid*.
20 Siegel 2016, p. 6.

and representational, in the sense that they represent the world as being a certain way, and that way can be either true or false.[21] Indeed, the "paradigm case" of a state with content is a propositional attitude, which describes a subject holding a particular attitude– for example, a belief or desire– toward a particular content, understood propositionally, and which is the condition under which the attitude is held accurate.[22] Thus, my belief that it is raining is true if and only if it is raining.[23]

Byrne asserts that a dominant view in the philosophy of mind holds that perceiving is very much like a traditional propositional attitude, such as believing or intending, and that, since propositions are given in conceptual terms, conceptualism about content is the "default" view.[24] Be that as it may, there are significant dissenting opinions over whether the content of experience is representational, propositional, and conceptual, and both Dreyfus and McDowell hold views on content that diverge– albeit with different emphases– from this 'default' view. I will now look at each of their views on content in turn, to set the scene for a fuller discussion, in the following sections, of their debate over the relationship of conceptuality to content.

Dreyfus and McDowell share the view that experience is *not representational*, although they come to this from different angles. Nevertheless, they both argue that experience has a content, and Crane notes that this use of content still lines up with Siegel's broad definition of experiential content as "what is conveyed to the subject by her perceptual experience."[25]

In *Mind and World*, McDowell is sympathetic towards a propositional understanding of content, defining content broadly as "what is given by a 'that'-clause," for example, a belief '*that* it is raining.'[26] McDowell argues that experience is likewise structured by a 'that'-clause– for example, a perception '*that* it is raining.' "In experience," argues McDowell "one takes in... *that things are thus and so*."[27] As I will discuss in more

21 Siegel 2016, p. 2; Byrne 2004, p. 232.
22 Bermúdez & Macpherson 1998, 3.
23 It should be noted that there remains some disagreement over the nature of propositional contents, and in what cases they could be held to be true. For example, under a Russellian view of content, 'she desires to see Hesperus' would fulfilled by any sighting of the planet Venus, whereas on a Fregean view the 'mode of presentation' must also be taken into account, and so a sighting of 'Phosphorus' in the evening sky would not fulfil the accuracy conditions. See Siegel 2016, pp. 9-16 for discussion of these and other theories of propositional content.
24 Byrne 2004, p. 245.
25 Crane 2013, p. 233; cf. Siegel 2016, p. 2. Crane (*op. cit.*) suggests that we should be happy to read Siegel's definition as "what is given to the subject in that experience."
26 McDowell 1994, p. 3.
27 *Ibid*, p. 9.

detail below, McDowell believes such experiential content is conceptual, since in being given in this form, it is immediately available as the content of conceptual capacities, since– at least when we are not misled– '*that things are thus and so*' can be the content of both an experience and a judgement.[28]

'When we are not misled' is an important caveat for McDowell since, as a disjunctivist, he denies that the content of veridical perceptions is the same as the content of illusions or hallucinations. For disjunctivists,

> some experiences consist in [an object] being perceptually presented [note, *not* represented] to a subject, so that both the [object] and the perceptual relation between it and the subject are constituents of the experience. According to this view, when you see a lavender bush [for example], some of its properties are presented to you, and your experience consists in your being so related to the bush and those of its properties that are presenting themselves to you.[29]

There is, however, a tension between this view, and the idea that content is propositional. As Crane notes, drawing an analogy to pictures, a picture "can have correctness conditions, but there is a difference between… having a correctness condition expressed by a proposition and its having a proposition as its content."[30] There is therefore a difference between an experience 'that things are thus and so' (for example, 'that the pig is under the oak') and a judgement that this experience is true or false. "[T]he pig being under the oak is not something that can be true or false," argues Crane. "It is just something that is there."[31] Travis therefore critiques the view that experiences have representational, propositional content– that is, that they are true or false. Rather, Travis makes an argument that "our senses confront us with what is there, they bring our surroundings into view, but there is nothing in a perceptual experience to make it count as having some one representational content as opposed to countless others."[32]

Under pressure from Travis, McDowell has come to accept that 'content' as he wants to use it– in a non-representationalist way– is non-propositional, although we will see below that he nevertheless maintains that it is conceptual, as he defines it, in that its

28 McDowell 1994, p. 26.
29 Siegel 2016, p. 4.
30 Crane 2013, p. 241.
31 *Ibid*, p. 239.
32 Soteriou 2014, 3.6.

form is 'suitable' for exploitation by conceptual capacities.[33] The essential point here is that for McDowell, the immediate content of perception (an 'intuition') is a direct presentation of the things themselves, *that* they are 'thus and so.'[34]

This understanding of content has some parallels with Dreyfus'. Where McDowell rejects representationalism on metaphysical grounds, a major theme of Dreyfus' work has been to build a non-representational account of agency based on his reading of the phenomenology of Heidegger, for whom he thinks that "*all* representational accounts are part of the problem."[35] Dreyfus nevertheless agrees that experience has an "*intentional* content," in the sense that it has correctness conditions, being a 'take' on the world that can be mistaken.[36] However, as well as rejecting the idea that such content is representational or propositional, Dreyfus also rejects the idea that it is conceptual. Part of this, we will see in more detail in the following sections, arises from a discordance in Dreyfus and McDowell's understandings of 'conceptual.' But before doing so, I will conclude this section by clarifying what Dreyfus means by 'non-conceptual content.'

Dreyfus' initial attack on McDowell was prompted in part by McDowell's lengthy rejection of non-conceptual content in *Mind and World.*[37] Yet there are some important differences between Dreyfus' phenomenological account of non-conceptual content, and the analytic accounts of non-conceptual content (largely inspired by Evans) that are the targets of McDowell's arguments.[38]

This analytic understanding of non-conceptual content holds that experience has non-conceptual content if it has accuracy conditions, and the subject of the experience need not possess the concepts used to specify such accuracy conditions.[39] For example, as Tye argues, experience is more fine-grained than conceptual judgement, citing studies that show that subjects struggle to re-identify specific shades, such as 'red_{27}' in the absence of the original sample.[40] Or as Peacocke notes, discussing what he calls 'scenario content,' we can represent spatial properties such as 'to the left' or 'three feet away' without possessing those concepts.[41]

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33 Crane 2013, 234.
34 Cf. McDowell 2007a, p. 348.
35 Dreyfus 2009, p. 69.
36 Dreyfus 2005, p. 55.
37 McDowell 1994, pp. 46-65.
38 Cf. Evans 1982.
39 Siegel 2016, p. 32.
40 Tye 2006, pp. 520-1.
41 Peacocke 1992, p. 65. Arguably, something similar holds for sensory perceptions such as

For Dreyfus, however, as we shall see in what follows, such content would already be related to a form of judgement. Indeed, in Dreyfus' view, McDowell's account of the non-intentional content of an intuition is already a kind of judgement, as it involves a step back from involved activity, or what he calls 'coping,' and which he accuses McDowell of overlooking.[42]

> Absorbed coping does not involve conceptual intentional content in McDowell's sense [i.e., to declare 'that things are thus and so,' and hence suitable to constitute content of conceptual capacities]; instead it involves motor intentional content.[43]

Motor intentional content has correctness conditions of the same sort as McDowell's intuitional content mentioned above, insofar as we can (afterwards) judge that the action has succeeded or not, yet it likewise does not involve a judgement of truth or falsity. However, in addition to being non-propositional and non-representational, Dreyfus also argues that it is non-mental, non-rational, and non-linguistic.[44] During coping, we are not presented with the world or with things, but find ourselves merged into the world. In leaving a room, Dreyfus argues, we do not ordinarily see the doorknob *as* a doorknob, and "least of all, *that* it affords opening the door."[45] Our hand automatically takes the shape of the doorknob as we approach it, and we simply go out.[46] Similarly, when an experienced speaker enters a room to give a talk, they walk up to the lectern and place their notes upon it, thereby articulating it as a lectern without taking it *as* a lectern. This activity and its content, Dreyfus holds, differs from experience of it *as* some*thing*, with a content 'that' it is 'thus and so.'

I will discuss these arguments in more detail below.[47] For the present, it is important just to recognise the senses of 'content' that are used in the debate. For both Dreyfus and McDowell, conceptual content is not understood in representational or propositional terms, but as a description of the direct presentation to the subject of an object *as* a *thing*. However, Dreyfus posits a second form of content, that he calls non-conceptual, motor intentional content, which describes the experience of finding

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darker/lighter and sweet/sour.

42 For this reason, Malpas (2012b, p. 322) suggests that the question of 'conceptual versus non-conceptual content' in this sense may be misleading, the same entities are presented to the subject regardless of whether they have a concept or not, in which case they simply 'grasp' the entity in a different way.

43 Dreyfus 2007a, p. 359.

44 *Ibid*, p. 360.

45 *Ibid*, p. 361.

46 *Ibid*.

47 See especially Chapter Three.

oneself 'merged' with an object during absorbed coping. For the purposes of this thesis, then, I will adopt these two senses of 'content,' referring to them respectively as 'conceptual' and 'non-conceptual.'

With this clearer idea of the subject matter, I will turn in the next two sections to look at Dreyfus and McDowell's respective positions on the presence of strong concepts in our embodied and unreflective action.

1.2 – *Dreyfus*

in which I explicate Dreyfus' position, that humans have two forms of mental content– non-conceptual and conceptual– which must undergo a translation to be experienced as the other.

We have seen so far that the dispute boils down to the nature of our unreflective action, or 'coping,' and centres on the question of whether embodied coping can be understood entirely independently of conceptual rationality.[48] Dreyfus answers in the negative, and most of his arguments are rooted in the observation that experts in various fields– baseball, chess, music– tend to perform at their best when they are not (reflectively) thinking about what they are doing. This shows, he argues, that strong concepts, which are evidently involved in *thinking*, must be absent in coping.[49] One of Dreyfus' favourite arguments in favour of coping's non-conceptuality is the case of baseballer Chuck Knoblauch.[50] Knoblauch was a major league second baseman who became (in)famous after falling into a curious pattern of throwing errors. He would repeatedly make mistakes with simple throws– throws over short distances when he had ample time ahead of him. Yet perhaps even more strangely, he was during the same period still capable of accomplishing very difficult throws under time-pressure with the high-level skill and accuracy that got him into the big leagues in the first place.

Dreyfus concludes from this story that Knoblauch's problem was that, on the simple throws, he was *thinking*– that is, employing strong, abstract concepts. Rather than trusting his body to reflexively aim and complete the throw, Knoblauch became entangled in conceptual thought, facing the concept-heavy problem of calculating how hard and at what angle he should throw the ball he was holding, with the result that his throws were far less than perfect. During the high-pressure, complex throws– with

[48] McDowell 2007a, p. 344-5.
[49] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 354.
[50] *Ibid*.

no time to think– Knoblauch simply reacted with the refined, smooth-coping that he had formerly employed even on his simpler throws.

Extending this thought has many implications. Dreyfus' assertion is that both our most expert as well as our automatic, everyday actions occur without that linguistic, 'strong' conceptual mode of cognition that modern philosophy has long taken to be the mark of the human (in Descartes' '*cogito*' or Kant's '*Ich denke...*,' for example). Our coping utilises cognitive capacities that we share with non-human animals.[51] This is in sharp contrast to McDowell who, we shall see in a moment, emphasises the difference between rational and non-rational animals. For while it is tempting to equate our smooth-coping actions with the behaviour of animals– as a fielder chasing a ball seems to act with the same smoothness and immediacy as a cat chasing a mouse– humans nevertheless *are* the only animals that can play baseball, because they are the only animal capable of learning the concepts of the equipment and the rules.

Of course, Dreyfus does not deny this. Rather, he wants to show not only the ways in which our experience parallels and diverges from that of animals, but more interestingly, how these two layers interact.[52] Indeed, Dreyfus' account of embodied coping is tied to his account of skill acquisition, where (with his brother Stuart) he describes how any skill– from chess to baseball to riding a bike– consists of a learning period in which performance is clumsy and thought-out, only following which we get the absorbed, reflexive coping of the expert in action.[53] From this, he argues that there is a change in intentional content as knowledge shifts from one layer to the other.

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[51] Somewhat problematically, few of the philosophers who discuss animality in this context– and especially Heidegger– make much distinction between different classes of animal, raising questions over whether the claims advanced here are applicable to all animals. Despite obvious problems, I will generally follow the convention of using 'animal' to refer to all non-human animals. It therefore bears mentioning early on that I have in mind principally the 'higher' animals, meaning birds, mammals and especially primates, since it is a fair assumption that any capacities for dealing with other entities that they lack will also be lacked by 'lower' animals (with the questionable exception of some cephalopods).

On a related note, I will throughout this thesis follow the convention of labelling animals 'lower' if their species has, in most basic respects, reached a fairly stable evolutionary form earlier in time than 'higher' animals. I am well aware that the evolutionary history of the animal kingdom is more of a hedge than a tree, and that every species is, in a sense, both complete in itself and in constant evolution. The term 'higher,' therefore, is not meant to imply a teleology. Nevertheless, the terms 'lower' and 'higher' animals are a convenient shorthand in this context to denote the presence or absence of certain forms of behaviour.

[52] Dreyfus 2007a, pp. 354-5.

[53] Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, pp. 19-36.

For example, most drivers will recall their awkward early attempts at trying to time pushing the clutch with shifting the gearstick, and the embarrassing stalls when this doesn't go to plan. Novice drivers are often taught to employ rules of thumb, such as changing gear at a certain rate of RPM, or to associate a certain gear number with a certain speed. Such rules are helpful, yet remain imperfect, and as the driver improves they learn through trial-and-error to adjust the rules to specific situations, such as climbing a steep hill. All the same, even as the driver becomes competent, the phenomenological experience of the task is as intellectually 'heavy.' The driver must concentrate their attention on what they are doing, and novel situations may require explicit decision-making, an inner dialogue saying, for example, 'this hill is really quite steep… I wonder if I should put it into second.'

For Dreyfus and Dreyfus, this sort of experience is contrasted against the highest stages of skill acquisition, which they call proficiency and expertise, where such explicit thinking plays a far smaller role. We can drive the winding country road while arguing with our passenger about whether our destination is before or after the bridge. As we climb the hill, we shift downgear automatically, our attention is concerned with the amount of fuel left rather than the speed, RPM, or even the sound of the engine.

The phenomenological observation that explicit concepts– 'thinking' and rules– fade as we become proficient at a skill is the other side of the observation that reflection, or the introduction of explicit thought, disrupts smooth coping.[54] In essence, explicit thought reverts us back to the beginner level, just as seemed to happen with Knoblauch. In a similar way, we might be confidently and automatically shifting through the gears as we round corners and climb hills, yet if we're suddenly asked to draw our attention to just how hard we push the clutch or exactly when we pull the gearstick, it is more likely that we will make an awkward mistake. Just as, when learning to drive, we necessarily employ a great deal of strong, rational concepts to achieve a rather imperfect performance, so when we reflect, our otherwise smooth coping is 'disrupted,' and we no longer perform as an expert.[55]

Dreyfus distinguishes between this kind of thinking *during* the task and reflection *after* the task, which, we will soon see, is crucial to McDowell's argument. McDowell might object that, while our expert gear-change might seem automatic, on attentive reflection we can attribute our downshift to an awareness of the car 'struggling.' But

[54] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 354.
[55] *Ibid*.

Dreyfus emphasises that this is not how the coping is phenomenologically *experienced*. Despite how it appears in reflection, we were not thinking that in the *moment of the task*. The '*moment of the task*'– or just *moment* for short, for I will frequently refer to it as we continue– indicates here not a mere instant of time, but rather the extended moment of the coping activity. As we prepare to hit a baseball, for example, the *moment* begins from the time we turn our attention to the task, and highlights all the entities that are relevant to that task– the pitcher, the ball, the positions of the fielders, and so on. As we hit the ball and enter the new moment of running, a different network of relevance is highlighted, including new elements like the bases, as well as former elements with a new significance, such as the ball and fielders. It should be stressed that the *moment* is not an enclosed moment in time that we cannot see beyond. Included in the significances of each *moment* are other possible *moments* that draw us towards or to avoid them. What is enclosed in each *moment* however is the significance objects hold to that *moment*, what they are seen *as* until the *moment* changes. The intimate connection of the '*moment of the task*' with the 'network of relevance' during coping will prove very important in the following Chapters. For now, it is enough to note that coping always occurs in such *moments*, and that these are defined by the task at hand.

Dreyfus emphasises this point by invoking Sartre's famous example of his experience chasing down a streetcar. "When I run after a tram…" says Sartre, "there is no *I*… I am then plunged into the world of objects… which present themselves with values, attractive and repulsive values, but as for *me*, I have disappeared."[56] The street takes on a particular significance– the footpath, kerb, and other pedestrians appear differently and indeed have a different significance than they would if we were, for instance, trying to find the café where we are meeting a long-separated friend. However, Dreyfus points out with interest that in reflection, Sartre "can't help remembering himself" as the subject of his experience, when he actually does reflect backwards on it.[57]

Dreyfus locates in reflection an active process, a *transformation* of the pre-conceptual, embodied action into a strongly conceptual thought. [58] "Reflection *rationalises*" says Carman, emphasising that reflection is not a passive 'looking' at an already conceptual coping, but an active modification of the primordial, embodied

[56] Sartre 2004, p. 13.
[57] Dreyfus 2007b, p. 373.
[58] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 360.

experience.[59] When we reflect, we are not simply making a more explicit examination of the content of our involved smooth-coping. Rather, says Dreyfus, "reflection must introduce some other content."[60] Reflection doesn't just *discover* the implicit content; it *creates* it.

Importantly, we are not usually aware of creating this content, since we experience it as though it was always there. For example, Dennett has made much of the way our conscious mind "confabulates" or creates a narrative to explain our actions, and notes that this narrative feels convincing even when it demonstrably false.[61] Gazzaniga's work with split-brain patients suggests that rational explanations very frequently come after the fact, and can be completely and unconsciously fabricated.[62] In one experiment, he tells the speech-less right brain hemisphere of a patient to 'take a walk.' As the patient stands up to go, he then asks the left-brain what it is doing. The left-brain replies with an explanation along the lines of 'oh, I need to get a drink,' or something similar, to rationalise the behaviour it has found itself performing.[63] The relevant point of this experiment here is that the stories we tell ourselves and others to explain our actions don't necessarily line up with the chain of events that actually brought about those actions. The reflective mind imposes reason on its own embodied behaviour.

We seem therefore to have an inbuilt tendency to construct and to believe very complex narratives that explain our actions, but that reasoning may be only incidentally or inferentially related to the reasons for why we do what we do.[64] Sartre's observations show that the 'I,' the sense of being a subject, only appears on reflection, as the central peg on which the narrative is fixed. As Dreyfus puts it, only when I step back or reflect– either in remembering a past action, or when my smooth-coping is interrupted– can I "then retroactively attach an 'I think' to the coping and take responsibility for my actions."[65]

Thus at the heart of Dreyfus' account is the argument that there are two distinct forms of content: one– that he calls '*conceptual*' (in the strong sense)– that is tied to explicit,

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[59] Carman 2013, p. 166.
[60] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 360.
[61] Dennett 1991, p. 250.
[62] Gazzaniga 1998, p. 133. Cf. Gazzaniga *et al*. 1977, p. 1146.
[63] Gazzaniga 1998, p. 133.
[64] The English word 'reason' here covers two terms that are distinct in languages like German, which has separate words for the faculty of reason (*Vernunft*) and causal reasons (*Gründe*). I will expand on this distinction in Chapter Three.
[65] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 356.

linguistic thought, and that is created through the process of reflection away from a second, more primordial intentionality. This second but prior form– the content of our embodied coping– is therefore contrasted as *non-conceptual*. In the following section, we will see that, while McDowell certainly doesn't want to restrict talk of content or intentionality (mindedness) to explicit thinking, he nevertheless insists that there is only one form of content involved across both– that is, the strongly conceptual.

1.3 – *McDowell*

in which I explicate McDowell's position– that coping shares a single form of mental content with reflective thought– before arguing that he nonetheless admits of two layers of experience that correspond to Dreyfus' account.

If concepts are not restricted to reflective 'thinking' in any traditional sense for McDowell, what exactly does he mean by conceptual capacities? In this section, I will unpack McDowell's 'normative' account of concepts to give us a clearer idea of what he means when he argues that they are active even in unreflective action. First of all, we must constantly remember that for McDowell concepts are intimately entwined with rationality, with a faculty of reason of a distinctly human sort.

> The idea of the conceptual that I mean to be invoking is to be understood in close connection with the idea of rationality, in the sense that is in play in the traditional separation of mature human beings, as rational animals, from the rest of the animal kingdom.[66]

Concepts are things that we have that other animals do not. For the first part, McDowell leaves aside the question of animal minds to focus on what he considers a uniquely human form of mindedness, one he considers synonymous with rationality.[67]

McDowell sees our conceptual capacities as bound to this distinctively rational, distinctively human, way of relating to the world. They give rise to our judgements and beliefs, insofar as it does not make sense to speak of the judgements and beliefs of a creature that is not capable of rationally relating to the world. Neither does it make sense to speak of conceptual capacities without relating them to the world, since

[66] McDowell 2007a, p. 338.
[67] *Ibid*, p. 339.

McDowell understands conceptual content as the "world-directedness" of concepts.[68]

We shall see later on that McDowell's understanding of 'world' differs from Dreyfus', and that this difference is not without consequence. But what is important for the moment is we are beginning to see the epistemological issues at stake in McDowell's mind. Our concepts carry (or *are*) information about how we find the world to be, they 'ground our judgements and beliefs.'[69] It seems that for McDowell, the conceptual is our most basic way of relating to the world, as he understands it. As rational, minded animals, it does not make sense for him to speak of a relation to the world that does not involve these faculties; they are pervasive every way we turn.

The concept, for McDowell, is *relational*. It exists between the rational animal and the world. We might not yet want to call it a medium, for that seems to objectify it where perhaps it will prove to be no more than an attitude taken by a rational animal with regard to its experience of a state of the world. Where Dreyfus attributes to McDowell the view that concepts are a "mediation" between subject and world, this still implies that for McDowell, conceptualisation is essentially an *activity*, and does not imply that he believes that concepts have some kind of object-hood in itself.[70] McDowell might even prefer to say that the concept *is* the experience itself, hence with no implication of any distance between the subject and the world.[71]

This is true of McDowell's stance at least so far as he holds that rationality is something performative. This picture of rationality is not the traditional one, and McDowell stresses that we– and especially Dreyfus– should not bring that view to his picture. His rationality is not simply a way of thinking, an abstraction away from the direct experience at hand. Such a conception of rationality as "detached and situation-independent" is, he holds, "hopeless," and, he believes, the source of Dreyfus' misunderstanding of his position.[72]

To imagine concepts in an involved, undetached way, McDowell distinguishes two ways we can experience a concept– firstly, by articulating it in an explicit way, and secondly, by its direct experience in a situation-specific context. Both ways are to be seen as the employment of rational conceptual capacities, and the content– the world-

[68] McDowell 1996, pp. 251-2.
[69] Dreyfus 2013, p. 19.
[70] *Ibid*, p. 17.
[71] McDowell 2013, p. 44.
[72] McDowell 2007a, p. 342.

directedness– of each is the same, and undergoes no change in the articulation away from experience. This is Dreyfus' key point of disagreement since, as we have seen, he feels that only the detached articulation can properly be called minded. McDowell, however, holds that precisely this "idea that mindedness is detached is just what I mean to oppose."[73]

Since Dreyfus brings his own understanding of mindedness and conceptuality to his reading of McDowell, McDowell suggests that he and Dreyfus may be engaged in a false debate. Where for Dreyfus mindedness is defined by its detachment from involved action, McDowell insists that he means no such thing when he argues that mindedness or rationality is pervasive. Our experience just *is* the actualisation of our conceptual capacities; these capacities don't start up *after* some prior experiencing has provided raw or non-conceptual data.[74] "The practical concepts realised in acting are concepts of things to do," he writes. "Realising such a concept is doing the thing in question, not thinking about doing it."

And yet McDowell can't escape the phenomenon of detachment altogether, even as he takes pains to avoid it in his writing. He is rightly irked that Dreyfus locates it in his work via a misleading quotation from *Mind and World*. But although Dreyfus' selection distorts the sense of concept that McDowell wants to establish, we will see that the spirit of his criticism articulates a concern that McDowell does not fully answer. I present here the full quote– dealing with what McDowell believes is the immediately conceptual experience of colour– italicising the lines that Dreyfus picks out as representative of his understanding of McDowell's view:

> We can ensure that what we have in view is genuinely recognizable as a conceptual capacity if we insist that the very same capacity to embrace a colour in mind can in principle persist beyond the duration of the experience itself. In the presence of the original sample, 'that shade' can give expression to a concept of a shade; what ensures that it is *a concept– [is] what ensures that thoughts* that exploit it *have the necessary distance from what would determine them to be true*– is that the associated capacity can persist into the future, if only for a short time, and that, having persisted, it can be used also in thoughts about what is by then the past, if only the recent past.[75]

[73] McDowell 2007b, p. 366.
[74] McDowell 2013, p. 41.
[75] McDowell 1994, p. 57; Dreyfus 2013, p. 17.

Taken in isolation, Dreyfus' selection sweeps away McDowell's careful subtlety. But the passage nonetheless reveals an important division in what McDowell maintains is a uniform use of the term 'concept.' We find firstly the concept, untraditionally read as the direct experience of the world, albeit with the potential to be held over time. This directly experienced concept seems distinct from thought. Thought is an activity, something that exploits concepts; it is the activation of an experience that is already conceptual.

The direct concept is unmediated; it *is* the experience– the relation between subject and world– itself. Yet this experience is defined by its essential thinkability. Conceptual capacities are those that provide potential objects for rational thought. Thought, however, as a separate activity, seems to be detached from the immediate experience. It seems directed towards experience only through a medium, the medium of the concept, which is now objectified for it.

The thought or objectified and distanced concept corresponds to a more traditional picture of concepts, and seems to be what Dreyfus has in mind when he criticises McDowell's extending it into immediate experience. While we might say this concept is distinct from thought, it is also dependently bound to thought, since it would not make sense to speak of concepts in this way, or of 'thought' as we generally use it, at all except in reference to each other. Although it is not clear that the originally experienced concepts *need* to be thought in this detached way, McDowell seems to insist their always being think*able* is part of their essential nature.

We can see, then, that there seem to be two layers in McDowell's description, which almost correspond to the different levels that Dreyfus discusses, that is, a reflexive immediate level opposed to an abstract or explicitly-thought one. However, where Dreyfus speaks of a non-conceptual experiential layer that is abstracted into conceptual thought, McDowell maintains that the experiential layer *is already* conceptual, and simply provides the material for abstract thought. Or to put it another way, we could say that thought is the exercise of our concepts, which arise in some other way.

McDowell takes this for granted, saying that it

> should not seem contentious that a conceptual capacity would need to be able to be exercised in thought... And it should not seem contentious that what determines the

content of a thought must be distinct from what would determine it to be true.[76]

We must wonder, though, if that is where the true contention lies. Dreyfus would probably not argue that a conceptual capacity needs the potential to be exercised in thought, and indeed, he would probably also agree that thought just *is* the exercise of a conceptual capacity. The finer question remains, rather, of whether we can say that the content of the direct, involved perceptual experience *undergoes any change when it is expressed in thought*?

This is an important question that will require a lot of expanding, but it has so far become clear that an essential point of the debate is McDowell's saying 'no' to this question where Dreyfus says 'yes.'

Understanding their divergent responses will mean that we need to take ourselves back away from the realm of thought– that both agree *is* a conceptual capacity in action– to the real site of the dispute, the initial, involved experience. In the following, we will examine how Dreyfus and McDowell understand the human, rational animal's encounter with the world, and the steps it takes toward experiencing that world as thought. I will then lay out the parallels in both thinkers' accounts and argue that, while they understand different things by 'conceptuality,' we can put them onto the same page by attending to their basic agreement over the phenomena that are present in experience.

1.4 – *World*

in which I compare Dreyfus and McDowell's conceptions of 'world,' finding that they agree that a concept is a relation to the world, yet differ insofar as Dreyfus holds we have a more fundamental mode of cognition than this relation.

Both McDowell and Dreyfus understand concepts in the context of the human being's relation to the world. But this apparent common starting point conceals an important difference in the issues at stake for each philosopher. In this section, I will unpack what each thinker understands by 'world,' revealing a larger gap in their understanding of concepts than the one we seemed to have bridged.

We have seen how McDowell understands content as the 'world-directedness' of a

[76] McDowell 2013, p. 44.

conceptual capacity. But we will see in this section that McDowell's use of 'world' fluctuates between an external sense and a more phenomenological one with its source in Gadamer, a distinction which is often lost. In some places, McDowell evokes the world as something almost objective, or at least, the objective sum of what our epistemological faculties– our perception and rational thinking, understood as conceptual capacities– can reveal to us of the nature of reality. "The world," he writes in this sense, "*understood as everything that is the case*, is not outside the sphere of the conceptual."[77] That is, we are to understand world as something like a totality of our conceptual relationships, relationships that have a truth value.

It follows from this that world is something that belongs only to those creatures who have conceptual relationships, that is, only to rational animals. For this reason, McDowell sees a kindred thinker in Gadamer, who distinguishes between the world (*Welt*) and the environment (*Umwelt*), reserving the former for humans, while the latter is a more basic relationship held by animals. We will look more closely at our differences with animals in Chapters Three and Five. What is more pressing for the moment is the triangular relationship between rational animals, concepts, and world. Following Gadamer, McDowell emphasises a new feature that serves to hold the corners of the triangle together, a feature indisputably associated with human beings: *language*.

McDowell picks up on Gadamer's claim that it is language which introduces the "free, distanced orientation" to our relationships to the world.[78] However, McDowell does not understand this distance as the one we saw above, dividing immediate perception from reflective thought. Gadamer's distance is, in McDowell's reading, a distance which extends the immediate percept beyond its moment of experience into a categorial schema. That is, even while the perception is experienced as part of its immediate context, it is distanced enough to relate to the broader context of the perceiver's past and future projects and expectations. If our most immediate experience is conceptual, then that experience is *already* distanced from the world. The experience itself discloses a 'world' to the perceiver; the object is immediately perceived as belonging to a class of objects with an enmeshed significance in the totality that is the world. "If an experience is world-disclosing," says McDowell, "any aspect of its content hangs together with other aspects of its content in a unity of the

[77] McDowell 2006, p. 1065, my emphasis.
[78] McDowell 2007a, p. 346.

sort Kant identifies as categorial."[79] Thus our experience of a cow, for example, includes not just the perceptual experience of the animal immediately before us but, just as immediately, the wider array of properties we associate with it (curious, intelligent, stubborn, sacred), properties which in turn derive both from our own experience and from our wider cultural setting.

So we find that 'categorial,' a property associated with a detached understanding of concepts, also plays a key role in McDowell's understanding not only of concepts but of world. Our world *is* categorial experience, or put better, the experience of a rational animal is one that immediately takes its objects of experience as a cohesive system of relationships– that is, as concepts– that have their content through their reference to the entire system– their world-directedness. Crucially, McDowell emphasises, we do not need to be aware of or even to perceive the entire system in each moment of experience;

> "What is important is this: if an experience is world-disclosing, which implies that it is categorically unified, *all* its content is present in a *form* in which... it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities."[80]

The subtle point of McDowell's view arises as he relates concepts out to the world. We can see now why he adamantly insists that holding our fundamental experience to be conceptual is not to be taken to mean that that experience is *thought*. When he calls our attitude to the world 'pervasively rational,' he means rather that, as rational beings, we are such that any relation we could *potentially* form gets that potential from our capacity to connect it into our categorial understanding of objects– there simply *is no other way* we can form relationships.

The above quotation also highlights the integral relationship of language and world-disclosure within McDowell's theory. Specifically, it is important to note his emphasis on the *potentiality* of the content's becoming conceptual, through its disclosing a world. We should read this as an emphasis on the active role of the perceiver in coming to experience the world. The world does not 'give' itself to a passive receiver, but this suggests nothing like its being idealistically created by an isolated mind. Rather, McDowell's point is that our experience of the external world is always structured by the conceptual capacities we bring to it. As a result, every experience is constituted by

[79] *Ibid*.
[80] *Ibid*, p. 347.

content that *could*, by its very nature, be articulated.

Thus McDowell maintains that rationality– our conceptual capacities– is present in our most fundamental relation to the world, the basic level of action that Dreyfus insists is non-conceptual. Here, however, there is scope to inquire whether McDowell and Dreyfus are on the same page. Dreyfus certainly doubts that they are, believing that "McDowell begins his description of mind and world too late."[81]

Dreyfus reads 'world' directly from Gadamer's teacher, Heidegger. In Heidegger, we certainly see concepts as a relation between Dasein (the rational animal[82]) and the 'world,' but only after an important shift in Dasein's consciousness.[83] In his so-called 'theory of equipment' in *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that during our everyday activities, things like subject, object, and world– all the things invoked by McDowell's description of concepts– remain invisible.[84] It is only after something has gone wrong, after the activity has been interrupted by equipment breaking, going missing, or being unsuitable for the task that Dasein is forced from its immersed involvement and "the world announces itself."[85]

Reading world in this way, we find the heart of Dreyfus' problem with McDowell's thesis, and it has less to do than we first thought with a disagreement over what concepts are. As we have seen, Dreyfus seems to agree with McDowell that a concept can be understood as a relation connecting Dasein and the world, if we take thought as the employment of conceptual capacities that are by their nature world-directed. But as we saw earlier, what this means is that the concept, as relation (or even relational activity), is a mediation. Even if the concept is viewed only as a relation, it is a relation *between* the subject and the world. The world is something other; it is a thing.[86] But in our original, 'un-broken' dealings, we– Dasein– are being-in-the-world. That is, the world is not some-*thing* beyond us to which we relate. Primordially, the world disappears, so that there is no need for mediation.[87] "When Dasein is totally merged with the world" in the context of an activity, says Dreyfus, "there is no place

[81] Dreyfus 2013, p. 23.
[82] Although Heidegger would certainly prefer the original Greek *zoon logon echon*.
[83] Heidegger never uses the word 'consciousness'– in fact, he conspicuously avoids it– but the issue at stake here is what modern philosophers of mind would describe, however vaguely, as consciousness, and it remains a far less cumbersome label than 'being-towards-entities' or such.
[84] Heidegger 1962, pp. 95-102.
[85] *Ibid*, p. 105.
[86] Dreyfus 2013, p. 17.
[87] *Ibid*, pp. 17-8.

for *content*."[88] That is, content– as world-directedness– simply cannot apply to descriptions on this level, because there is no world outside of Dasein for it to be directed towards.

There is no content, Dreyfus says, because there is nothing that could contain– no outer and, therefore, no inner. Hence McDowell's description does not remain strongly divorced from Dreyfus' but rather, in the latter's terms, seems somewhat incomplete. By beginning at the level of the world, we find that mindedness– rationality– is not only present in but *is* that basic relation towards the world of things, of everything that is the case. Conceptuality does indeed pervade down to our first experience of the world. But this misses the crucial point– the world is by this stage already 'distanced.'

I have so far been examining Dreyfus and McDowell's differing ideas of concept. We have seen that the two philosophers do not completely lack common ground. Both identify differing spheres of thought and action, with Dreyfus arguing for a conceptuality that is based on reflection and hence limited to the thought sphere, while McDowell argues that it is the *potential* to be the content of reflection that makes something conceptual. I therefore wish to step back from definitions of concept to examine the kind of content that is present in these different situations. I will argue in the following section that McDowell needs to acknowledge a second kind of content that I believe is equivalent to what Dreyfus is attempting to show, even though McDowell maintains that both are conceptual.

1.5 – *Parallels*

in which I argue that Dreyfus and McDowell agree on the phenomena at stake, while differing in the* way *conceptuality is understood.

We have so far been examining Dreyfus and McDowell's differing ideas of concept. We have seen that the two philosophers do not completely lack common ground. Both identify a phenomenal difference between spheres of thought and action. The key point of their divergence is rather that where Dreyfus argues for a conceptuality that is based on reflection and is hence limited to the sphere of thought, McDowell insists that it is an experience's *potential* to be the content of reflection that makes it conceptual.

[88] *Ibid*, p. 29.

These overlapping layers of agreement and disagreement may lead one to question whether the two philosophers are entirely on the same page, and Rouse, for one, argues that they are not. He takes a step away from the debate and identifies two ways of talking about concepts, the 'descriptive' and the 'normative,' which he then says Dreyfus and McDowell respectively exemplify.[89] For descriptive approaches such as Dreyfus', conceptuality is understood as tied to a reflective faculty. Concepts only come into being when they are articulated in language (or analogously in thought, narrowly construed). Conceptual content is understood as something "actually present"[90]; hence Dreyfus argues that its absence in absorbed coping means that the content of that coping is non-conceptual.

'Normative' approaches, on the other hand, emphasise the conditions under which conceptualisation is possible. The conceptual is understood as performances and capacities that are appropriately assessed according to rational norms.[91] It is for this reason that McDowell speaks rather in terms of content's *potential* articulation as conceptual, than whether any such articulation or thought has actually taken place.

When McDowell argues that smooth-coping must necessarily be the activation of prior learned concepts, then, he is asserting that the actions being undertaken– as part of a human way of life– ought to be judged in terms of the rational norms that give those actions meaning in the context of human life. And the human activities that Dreyfus constantly uses as examples all presume initially learning concepts that belong to a social context, a context that extends far beyond what is available to non-rational animals. While the skills employed in these activities may be accomplished through what Merleau-Ponty called 'motor intentionality'– the unreflective understanding demonstrated in skilful bodily actions[92]– we have already seen that they tend to be taught using conceptual steps, and at any rate take place within a context created via learned concepts– what McDowell calls 'second nature.'[93] Thus, although it is conceivable that, through imitation, a child could learn to use a cricket bat without any explicit instruction, she must also acquire such 'strong' concepts as 'wicket' and 'out' before she could be said to have any kind of understanding of or expertise in the sport. Even though Dreyfus would argue that such strong concepts are

[89] Rouse 2013, p. 250.
[90] *Ibid*, p. 251.
[91] *Ibid*.
[92] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 113.
[93] McDowell 1994, p. 84; cf. McDowell 1998a, pp. 185, 188-92.

internalised as one becomes an expert, and are hence no longer 'operative' in the way McDowell holds, he does not deny that concepts are involved in the acquisition of many of our skills.[94]

Based on these agreements, Rouse argues (rightly, I believe) that descriptive and normative accounts are actually compatible, since the disagreement is rather over the *way* 'conceptual' is understood, rather than the phenomena in question. He argues that Dreyfus should admit that humans *understand* the norms of their activities, while McDowell could agree that experts may not have any explicit *rules* governing their normatively-assessable actions.[95] Rouse also emphasises that McDowell *does* agree that coping doesn't involve explicit reflection on norms.[96] Yet Dreyfus might take this point even further, to focus our attention beyond the network of norms onto the actual task itself, the *moment* of action. In this case, it is perhaps misleading to speak of cricket (or chess, or any other activity) as a 'task,' in and of itself. The tasks completed with smooth-coping are rather 'micro-tasks'– throwing, catching, running– that are smaller and more momentary than the larger task of which they are a part.[97] Yet it is just these *moments* that interest us– and only *as* they are enacted. And as Rietveld points out, McDowell "does not mention anything related to what happens *in* an episode of unreflective action," but only the results of the reflection, which necessarily occurs only "after the fact."[98]

I will therefore argue in the final two sections that McDowell does admit of a kind of reflection, although one that is more direct and involved than the explicit stepping-back that Dreyfus focuses on. I will argue for this in the next section by drawing a parallel between these two pictures of reflection through what I will call 'Naming.' In the final section, I will argue that McDowell also admits of an unreflective content, that applies prior to 'Naming.'

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[94] McDowell 2007b, p. 366.
[95] Rouse 2013, p. 254.
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] It is equally important to remember that humans do not usually 'smoothly cope' at their tasks for long periods of time. Cricket or chess include just as much time standing or sitting around, watching, thinking, daydreaming, and so on. Part of what makes the performance of experts 'in the flow' so impressive is the apparent lack of the 'broken-ness' that permeates our everyday smooth-coping. These points will be expanded upon in Chapter Two.
[98] Rietveld 2010, p. 197.

1.6 – *Naming*

in which I identify 'Naming' as a process that both thinkers describe as making content available for reflective thought.

As we begin to understand how 'concept' is understood by McDowell and Dreyfus, we have found that the debating philosophers share a deal of common ground. One of the main points of contention between them remains whether the content of an experience changes in reflection. We will leave this open for the time being, to explore another point that both thinkers share– the role of Naming in introducing concepts into experience. Although the point at which this Naming occurs will be disputed, it will be significant later on if we can establish that both Dreyfus and McDowell understand Naming in a similar way, and find an interwoven link between reflection, conceptuality and language– understanding the last of these, not always as explicit words, but at least the experience of objects and relations as something onto which words can be mapped.

'Naming' is my own term, yet it is appropriate in the context of both Dreyfus' and McDowell's accounts of conceptuality. 'Naming' for Dreyfus is the process of taking some non-conceptual content and making it explicit as the object of thought, something which may literally involve attaching a word to it, but in any case involves incorporating it into a broadly linguistic structure. What was before a fluid 'field of possibilities,' as Dreyfus quotes Merleau-Ponty, becomes concretised as a definite thing– a movement Dreyfus takes from Heidegger's account of the 'breakdown' from dealings with the ready-to-hand to knowledge of the present-at-hand.[99]

Naming's tie to language is pertinent in McDowell's case, as he accepts as instructive Sellars' thought that "grasping a concept is mastering the use of a word."[100] It is with such a thought in mind that he claims that some of our world-disclosing experience is already embraced by our conceptual capacities– or simply put, we already have words to mark the categorial extension of the objects of experience. McDowell is quite clear that not every world-disclosing experience *is* actually articulated. He is open to there being world-disclosing experiences whose content must be "*determined*" by a subject as the content of a conceptual capacity.[101] What this means is that our experience is not restricted to a limited 'vocabulary' but can be extended into further and further

[99] Dreyfus 1991, pp. 70-1; cf. Heidegger, 1962, p. 104.
[100] McDowell 2007a, p. 347.
[101] *Ibid*.

categories.[102] This is the process of *Naming*. 'Naming' for McDowell means to "annex" language to some world-disclosing experience so as to equip ourselves with new conceptual capacities, to "carve [the experience] out from the categorically unified… [yet]… unarticulated experiential content of which it is an aspect, so that thought can focus on it by itself."[103]

This means more than attaching a new label to something never seen before, in the way that European explorers gave the name 'dropbear' to those carnivorous koalas that inhabit Queensland's rainforests. It also means to form new categories within an existing categorial whole– picking out the eucalypts from the previously experienced forest. Importantly, McDowell emphasises that some world-disclosing experiences are *never* embraced by conceptual capacities. This is not to say that some parts of the world remain physically invisible, or unknowable. Rather, it means that our experience can only be as fine-grained as our 'vocabulary.' For example, we may name and conceptualise eucalypts, but never learn to distinguish between black gums and cabbage gums. The world that would thereby be disclosed by our experience of a eucalypt forest would be different than the one disclosed to an expert on Australian trees.

Either way, McDowell says, the experience discloses a world;

> whether or not a piece of experiential content is focused on and brought within the reach of a vocabulary, either given a name for the first time or registered as fitting something already in the subject's linguistic repertoire, it is anyway present in the content of a world-disclosing experience in a form in which it either actually is, or has the potential to be simply appropriated as, the content of a conceptual capacity.[104]

Our experiential content, to be experienced, must have this potential to be Named. But the Naming– and again this is crucial– need not have a verbal nor even an external articulation. "No aspect" of our experience, says McDowell, "is unnameable," but this does not mean that we have a name for every aspect.[105] "We do not need words for all the content that is conceptually available to us."[106] What is vital to the experience is

[102] Cf. the 'generative capacity' of language that Chomsky (2005, pp. 3-4) suggests holds the key to our human reasoning ability.
[103] McDowell 2007a, p. 347.
[104] *Ibid*, p. 348.
[105] *Ibid*.
[106] *Ibid*.

its *potential* to be Named. We do not have words necessarily in advance, but since we bring a conceptual structure with us to the experience, the discovery of the categorial extension of the object just *is* the experience itself. That is, our ability to recognise *this* tree *as* this *kind* of tree– a black gum, an old tree, infected with termites– marks our conceptual experience of it as such.

1.6.1 – 'This' *and* 'That'

***in which I argue that 'Naming', and hence, conceptuality, is seen by both thinkers as less dependent on situation-independent propositions as the direct experience of something as* 'this' *or* 'that'.**

If McDowell's understanding of concepts is 'normative,' we might ask how important this 'categorial extension' is to our unreflective experience. Is it really necessary to conceptually understand categorial relations in order to experience something? For McDowell rightly points out that we don't have a name for every aspect of our experience, and an aspect's name-ability often never extends further than a '*that*.' When we pick out a particular colour, it is often '*that* blue,' highly specific to the referent of the experience before us, not extending even to the similar shade nearby to which 'blue' refers but '*that*' does not. Or on a shelf of apparently-identical books, we can nevertheless isolate and grab '*that* book' as an object without any further extension.

Much of our experience never goes beyond this basic level of (pre-)verbalisation. As Dreyfus says,

> we rarely do just drop a name on an already-fully determinate feature implicit in the world. In our everyday skilful coping we are not focusing on and naming fixed features, let alone reflecting on them.[107]

While McDowell does not think the lack of reflection stands in the way of an experience's being conceptual, he is concerned about what to make of an unnamed experience. If a '*that*' is so immediate and unextended, if it lacks a "certain generality," ought we still to consider it fully conceptual?[108] McDowell's doubts here show how important he considers the conceptual experience's categorial extension, and reveal his intuition that even our most direct experiences disclose to us objects of a type– we don't just see a 'thing' or 'fruit-source' but a *tree*.

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[107] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 358.
[108] McDowell 2013, p. 43.

Finally, however, McDowell concludes that the '*that*' is a concept in action, because although it remains very specific to the situation, it is not so specific that its content or "associated capacity" cannot persist into the future.[109] That is to say, even something as specific as '*that* blue' can be returned to over and again, at least for the duration of the context in which we name it as such. It becomes a category unto itself, its extension not being to other objects, but to other experiences of itself as a unity. This indicates that there is a temporal aspect to concepts, although the concept need not persist very long at all. We may be unable to pick out *that* same blue the next day, or amongst a different context of blue things. But the fact that we do pick it out and hold it as '*that*' for any duration suggests that it has been conceptualised.

Dreyfus, on the other hand, doesn't believe that there even is a conceptual '*that*' in our coping experience. If the '*that*' is conceptual, he would say, then it is *not even implicit* in the experience.[110] In his original attack on McDowell's theory of mind and world, he says: "*Nothing about the position need be nameable and thinkable as a reason for acting*."[111] And again:

> It is important to be clear that... these conceptual structures are not *implicit* in our involved experience any more than reasons for our actions are implicit in our expert coping, or than the detached attitude is implicit in the engaged one.[112]

That is, Dreyfus insists that Naming is not helpful to us if it only describes the making explicit of an implicitly held concept, for he is adamant that the level he is interested in, the level of smooth-coping, is non-conceptual. To move away from it is not to make its implicit content explicit; rather, "reflection must introduce some other sort of content."[113] (However, McDowell also cautions against seeing Naming as just a move from implicitly to explicitly conceptual, although for different reasons. He is wary of having 'implicitly conceptual' read as "*only* implicitly conceptual," which seems to imply that conceptuality only becomes real in discourse.[114] "Making the content in question explicit does not make the content newly conceptual in any sense that is

[109] *Ibid*, p. 44.
[110] Dreyfus 2005, p. 51.
[111] *Ibid*, p. 55, Dreyfus' emphasis.
[112] *Ibid*, p. 60, Dreyfus' emphasis.
[113] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 360.
[114] McDowell 2007b, p. 367.

relevant to my claim," he says. "It was conceptual already."[115])

Despite their disagreement on where conceptuality begins, what these two stories do show is that both Dreyfus and McDowell accept Naming as tied to that beginning. For Dreyfus, Naming is the reflection, the change in content as it is brought out of non-conceptual coping into reflective thought. McDowell, for whom there is no change in content between coping and thought, still holds that the Naming marks the first exercise of a conceptual capacity– the coping either is or is simultaneously with the Naming. That is, only when something has been Named– as tree, eucalypt, or black gum, for example– can it be experienced– and everything experienced has been Named in some way (remembering of course that the Naming need not be actual verbal articulation). For Dreyfus, something un-Named is experienced only non-conceptually, prior to the subject-object experience. For McDowell, the un-Named is not– cannot be– experienced at all.

Yet we can see in the parallels between how Naming works for both Dreyfus and McDowell that, on the phenomenological level, some kind of reflection is going on even in the most situation-specific Naming of something as '*that*.' Although McDowell– following the 'normative' view of concepts– considers '*that*' to be "conceptual already," if we read his thoughts rather through the descriptive view favoured by Dreyfus, we seem to find a similar change in content. In the final section below, I will try to step outside these competing understandings of 'concept' and focus on the content of experience, arguing that a change of content can be found in each philosophers account. I will then conclude with the suggestion we base our idea of 'concept' on this division in content.

1.7 – Two forms of content

in which I argue that the thinkers each describe two layers of content, above purely reflexive actions, and differ in where they see the transition between layers occur.

We have just seen how both Dreyfus and McDowell connect a language-like process– what I have called Naming– to the experience of content as conceptual. Where they differ is in how they conceive of that process– for McDowell, Naming is *perceptual* and enacted in our direct experience. For Dreyfus, Naming is *reflective*, and involves a break in the direct experience of acting. The Naming process is how we produce

[115] McDowell 2013, p. 43.

strong concepts. As Carman summarises, the strong concepts revealed by Naming are

> why McDowell draws such a sharp distinction between human and 'mere animal' perception. He concedes that the two have something in common, yet it seems, on his view, such a something cannot be a kind of content. Not that he thinks mere animal experience has *no* content, only that whatever content it can be said to have cannot be the kind of content *we* have as rational subjects in *our* experience. For in order to be non-conceptual, our experience would have to be in principle unavailable to thought, as he seems to think mere animal perception is, while in order to have experience with conceptual content, an animal would have to be capable of autonomous rational thought, like us.[116]

That is to say, McDowell reasons that since we can *think* the content of an embodied act, such as catching a frisbee, such an action must already be conceptual. By the same reasoning, since a dog is not capable of rational thought, the same action on its part must be non-conceptual. But there is another possibility– that the distinctively human trait is not a conceptual rationality that extends all the way out, and that we can also bring forward reflectively; rather, *reflection itself* is the result of the key, uniquely human, ability, that *creates* conceptual content out of the pre-conceptual. Carman therefore sides with Dreyfus to argue that McDowell overlooks such reflective translation of content, and commits what Carman calls the 'Scholastic Fallacy,' the "illicit projection of the structure and content of reflection into unreflective experience."[117] For Dreyfus, our basic coping is as momentary, reflexive and solicited as a dog's, but we can translate the content of that experience *into* concepts through our reflective faculty. Other animals, lacking this faculty, also thereby lack concepts (in the strong sense).

We will leave aside the question of animals until Chapter Three. But what is emerging here are two pictures of the relationship between humans, concepts and world that share a lot of overlap. The debate now becomes one over where to draw the dividing lines, because we will see in this Section that McDowell also admits of some non-conceptual (or un-Named) experience, although he plays down its relevance. Here, then, I would like to suggest that if we probe a little more deeply into this point of

[116] Carman 2013, p. 168.

[117] *Ibid*, p. 175. O'Regan (2000) calls this kind of thinking the 'refrigerator light illusion.' Just as we should not conclude that the fridge light is always on because it seems to be every time we open the door to check, neither should we conclude than an experience is always conceptual (or conscious, etc.) because we encounter it this way each time we 'check' by reflecting. Cf. Dreyfus (2007b, p. 373) on how Sartre 'always finds' the ego in reflection.

McDowell's thinking, we will find not-quite-common ground with Dreyfus, but that each thinker's model, seen side-by-side, will reveal differing layers of content, although there remains a sharp disagreement between when each thinker believes this occurs.

As we have seen, McDowell rejects the assumption that thought or deliberation is necessary for rationality.[118] He extends conceptual capacities into our actions, and holds that the articulation (or Naming) of concepts need not be verbalised in the distance of language, but forms part of the very perception or action itself. As we saw above, what is really important is the *potential* or 'suitability' of expression in language, rather than its literal articulation. By accepting the centrality of a concept's *potential* articulation, we find the range of what can be considered conceptual vastly extended. McDowell argues that human actions should be understood as conceptual since the rational animal can always give *reasons* for its action, if prompted. Thus, McDowell would counter Dreyfus' example of the blitz-chess master's non-conceptual understanding by arguing that, although the chess-master would not have time to express any reasons as she makes her reflexive movement, she would not hesitate if asked to explain that a particular move would, for example, 'put my opponent's king in check.'

But McDowell goes even further, to assert that it is not simply the articulation of a reason that makes an act conceptual. He also posits the case of somebody walking through a park and spontaneously catching a passing frisbee.[119] When asked 'why?', such an agent could only reply “I just felt like it,” but McDowell all the same insists this action involves conceptual capacities since there is an extended awareness of what her catch and the frisbee involves, even if it is no more than a momentary '*this*.' Dreyfus, on the other hand, holds that the very act of articulation, changes the content to bring it out of the non-conceptual involved coping into a different mode of encounter. We may want to ask McDowell what happens if that potential for articulation or reflection is never acted upon, but his reply would be that the potential alone is enough, or rather, that by simply entering our conscious perception, such potential *needs* to have been actualised, as it has already entered a normative framework of meaning. That is, without such actualisation, the phenomenon couldn't have become an object of experience in the first place.

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[118] McDowell 2013, p. 47.
[119] *Ibid*, pp. 48-9.

But McDowell also recognises that many of our actions have become so internalised and habitual that there is little potential for them to become something experienced, becoming themselves a part of the background world that sets us up for other experiences. He himself chooses the example of the culturally-given distance we stand from a conversation partner as an illustration of an action that is clearly intentional and yet even in its learning seems to bypass any connection to concepts or rationality. Here, McDowell's account starts to appear less firm than it seemed. His reply attempts to avoid considering such actions as actions at all, claiming that a behaviour like distance-standing is "not an exercise of agency," and therefore is "not a counter instance to the pervasiveness thesis but falls outside its scope."[120] This reply is problematic, however, and reveals an ambiguity in McDowell's thesis that our normative responsiveness to the world is 'pervasively' conceptual.

McDowell comes to this conclusion by distinguishing between two different types of 'null' response to the 'why did you do that?' question that brings a concept-in-*potentia* into full articulation.[121] The first such 'null response' applies to episodes such as the spontaneous frisbee catch. Here, our friend replies "no particular reason," or "I just felt like it," from which McDowell infers that she naturally has an awareness of her action as an action, the frisbee as a frisbee, and so on. Thus, he would claim, if we were to probe a little deeper, we would have to find her in possession of the relevant concepts and reasons, even for such an impulsive act. On the other hand, says McDowell, if we were to ask someone why they were always standing about two feet from their various conversation partners at the Christmas party, their likely response would be "I didn't realise I was doing that."[122] Hence, McDowell seems to feel, the action is non-conceptual, but is also irrelevant to his thesis about the pervasiveness of concepts, and therefore of little concern. He even goes on to compare the norms of distance-standing to the tendency (for most humans) to instinctively use their right hand when they need to reach for something.[123]

This response is clearly not right, even beyond the fact that right- (and left-) handedness is a hard-wired trait, and distance-standing a culturally-absorbed norm. If we really press someone on why they are standing where they are, or why they stepped-back as their interlocutor moved towards them to let the waitress past, we

[120] *Ibid*, p. 51.
[121] *Ibid*.
[122] *Ibid*, p. 50.
[123] *Ibid*, p. 51.

might find some response like 'to give them room,' or perhaps just simply 'it doesn't feel right.' We can find many cases where a subject might initially answer 'I didn't realise I was doing...' extending out beyond distance-standing to actions like crossing a street, entering a building, driving, or even the way one holds a musical instrument– all of which perhaps might never achieve a clearer response than 'it just feels right.' Furthermore, as mentioned above, the human tendency to confabulate means that even clearer answers to these questions do not necessarily reveal a conceptual process at work in these 'automatic' actions. As Carman would say, to project the content of such reflection back *into* the unreflective experience is an illegitimate move, an example of the 'Scholastic fallacy.'[124]

McDowell's comparison of such unreflective actions with right-handedness seems to me a *non sequitur*. But is it perhaps just a bad example, or does it reveal a serious flaw in McDowell's thinking? A few pages later, McDowell uses a slightly stronger example of learned actions functioning unreflectively below the level of agency. Here, he compares the distance-standing norm to the 'click' noises made by Xhosa speakers– a behaviour that is acquired, no doubt, and normative, but seems truly without an intentional object. However, this lack of an intentional object is a distraction from the issue, which is the content of an action and how that action is experienced. Producing phonemes can certainly have a content in the same way as other actions. Learning Spanish in Spain, I was aware that 'J' is pronounced with a guttural rasp that has no equivalent in English, and yet I struggled early on to produce this sound. Even as I improved, I felt for a time self-conscious whenever I pronounced it, and it was only as my fluency increased that I began using it in a natural and unplanned way– something that I, of course, realised only on reflection, *after the fact*.

Thus we should not focus overly on an agent's ability to give *reasons* for their actions.[125] What is essential here is that the action can become the content of reflection– can be Named– or not. If one never learns another language or visits another culture, producing a phoneme or distance-standing might always remain unreflected upon. And yet the very possibility of reflecting on them– of making them the object of thought– signifies a change in content.

McDowell, therefore, in his discussion of these actions, admits a kind of content that

[124] Carman 2013, p. 175.
[125] The difference between giving reasons (*Gründe*) and the faculty of Reason (*Vernunft*) will be expanded upon in Chapter Three.

differs from the content of thought. This should not be surprising, given that his 'normative' account of conceptuality has focused rather on content's *potential* articulation. Yet by identifying conceptual rationality as simply the ability to 'give reasons,' he is forced to explain away phenomena that are in a clear continuum with the actions he describes. Indeed, we will see in Chapter Three that McDowell does offer a more nuanced understanding of strong 'rationality' that goes beyond articulating reasons for an action. Yet his focus on 'giving reasons' here means that his claim that acts like producing phonemes distance-standing do not involve agency does not stand up to the fact that such acts can be learned in just as conceptual a way as any manual skill, and performed as reflexively as Dreyfus claims.

To find actions that entirely lack agency, we would need to turn to bodily reflexes, such as blinking, flinching, or the knee-jerk. These responses entirely lack a cognitive element. What we find here is a fourth layer, a truly basement level below what Dreyfus thinks of as non-conceptual, a layer where talk of conceptuality and non-conceptuality does not really apply, since there is no agency here at all. We can illustrate this by imagining a third 'null response' to McDowell's question “Why are you doing that?” As we saw, the first response applies to the disputed level of the frisbee-catch, where the agent replies “I just felt like it,” revealing a sense of conceptuality to McDowell that Dreyfus doesn't really buy. The next layer down is one that we have seen– surprisingly– that both philosophers agree is non-conceptual, where the distance-stander makes the second response of “I didn't realise I was doing that, but it just *felt* right.” Yet here McDowell's claim that there is no agent in such an activity is unconvincing. Perhaps there is no sense of an agent initiating the action– certainly there is no reflective thought– but this only emphasises Dreyfus' point that these basic activities take place before subject, object and world have arisen. Similarly, the question to a Xhosa speaker “Why are you making that click?” (or equivalently, from a German to an English speaker, “Why are you making that θ sound?”) would have no intelligible response. At this level, there is not even a question of something feeling right or not; the only reply could be “because that's the way things are.”

None of these actions should be confused with the basement layer of hard-wired action. Such reflexes are not a matter of choice, and can therefore only be answered– if at all– with a totally different kind of 'null response.' If asked why you blink every four seconds, or why you kicked out when the doctor tapped your knee, you could legitimately answer that '*I* didn't mean to do it.' Even if your awareness is brought to such actions, you cannot alter them (or perhaps only with an extreme effort), showing

that they are indeed not an act of agency.[126]

What this discussion shows is that both McDowell and Dreyfus see a non-conceptual layer to account for. But McDowell's way of handling it– brushing it off by equating it with the basement-level of hard-wired response– is inadequate, and fails to account for the situationally-responsive agency in the ground-floor non-conceptual level. The best he could do here would be to introduce the idea of a continuum running through these non-conceptual layers that reads the agency we see on the ground-floor as at best implicit projections. But this kind of answer begins to look suspiciously like Dreyfus' own argument as to why we should take the middle-floor, situationally-specific actions as non-conceptual rather than conceptual as McDowell claims. That is, if we allow a continuum between the basement and the ground-floor, we are just as justified in continuing it through to the first floor.

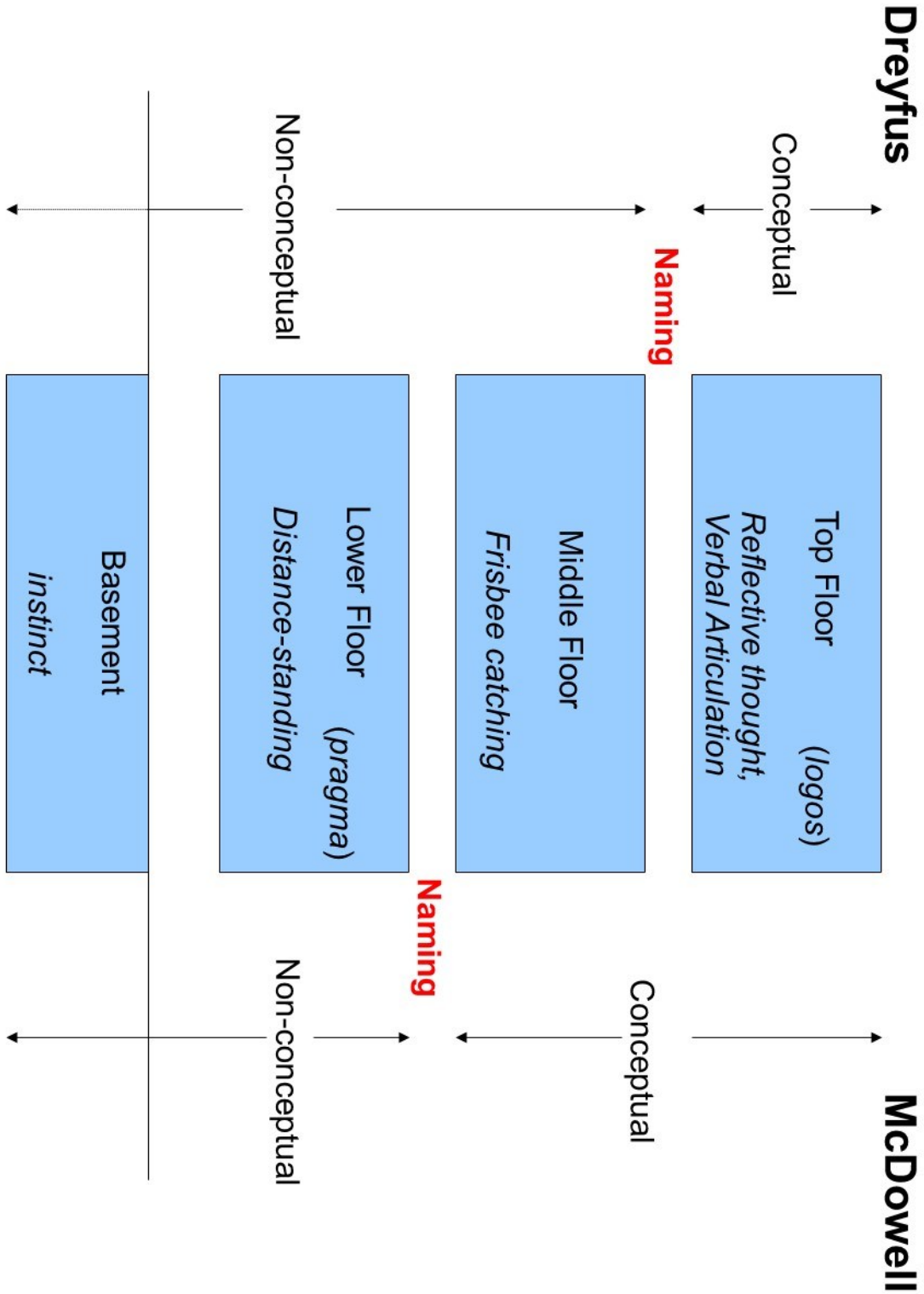
1.7.1 – *Combined models*

in which I show the parallels in Dreyfus' and McDowell's accounts.

We have seen, therefore, that despite some serious differences in how they understand the way such experiences relate, Dreyfus and McDowell share some agreement over the phenomena that are present. To finish, then, I will sketch out a side-by-side view of each thinker's model in the terms I have described in this Chapter (see Figure One). Although we find that their views do not strictly overlap, we seem to find three tiers of increasing abstraction– from a non-conceptual lower floor, to a situationally-enacted middle, and an abstractly-conceptual top floor– that both Dreyfus and McDowell seem to acknowledge, although both interpret the middle floor with a rather different emphasis. Both thinkers agree that the top floor is conceptual in the traditional, reflective sense that is tied to explicit language. I will therefore call such content *logos*, in anticipation of the discussions to come in the following Chapters. Both thinkers also, I have argued in this Section, agree on a form of non-conceptual experience on the ground floor.

[126] Interestingly, it may be possible train oneself, with intense concentration, not to react with instinctive reflexes. Levenson *et al*. (2012) showed that a Buddhist monk in deep meditation was able to suppress the 'startle' response when a gunshot-level sound was played close to him. Such cases suggest that the interplay between conceptual and instinctive behaviour can go very deep indeed and that conscious control over the most hard-wired neural connections is possible. However, such examples are extremely rare and go beyond the everyday actions that are our focus here.

Figure One: Three (or four) storeys of intentionality.



The real point of difference is what to make of the middle floor, and this– we have seen– comes down to where each thinker envisions the act of Naming. Dreyfus places Naming between the middle and top floors, and hence does not really distinguish between the lower and middle floors. For him, any action prior to Naming reveals an understanding and experience involving non-conceptual content. McDowell, on the other hand, since he denies any agency to lower floor dealings, would insist that the content of the middle floor has already been Named; the situational-enactment of such content is for him the employment of conceptual capacities, and distinct from uninterpreted lower floor actions, which belong rather on a direct continuum with the instinctive basement level.

Whether these groups are really groups, and these gaps are really gaps, or whether they instead mark out a continuum along which all cognitive activity falls, we will leave open for now, and understand this model as a theoretical tool representing what is stake in this debate.[127] As a minimum, however, it is now clearer that, despite very different understandings of the term 'concept' and the way they read it in one another's work, Dreyfus and McDowell do have a broad agreement over the phenomena in question, as well as more than superficial differences in how they interpret such phenomena.

Conclusions

I have argued in this Chapter that both Dreyfus and McDowell agree on several key points. They agree that our cognition extends beyond linguistic thought, that our coping is embodied, and most importantly, I have argued that they should agree that there is a change in content between these two levels. McDowell would probably contest this final point. However, I have shown that his disagreement with Dreyfus over whether to call embodied, absorbed content 'conceptual' rests on differing understandings of conceptuality, with Dreyfus restricting it to a *reflective* capacity, while McDowell holds that it needs simply to be a *potential* object for reflection, assessable by rational norms.

With this in mind, I have suggested laying aside the question of whose definition of

[127] It is worth flagging here that these layers, together with the instinctive 'basement,' also have an imperfect overlap with the three forms of behaviour– the 'syncretic,' the 'amovable,' and the 'symbolic'– that Merleau-Ponty posits in his *Structure of Behaviour* (1963, pp. 103-4). These parallels will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

'conceptual' is better, and focusing on the phenomena. I have shown that McDowell also understands a change in content that takes place when an intentional object's *potential* conceptuality is *actualised*. That is, we experience entities differently based upon whether we have *Named* them or not, and McDowell's struggles to account for acquired yet unconscious actions such as distance-standing shows that space for this kind of content must be included in his model. Extrapolating from this experience, we can also see that his insistence on a single kind of content pervading both linguistic thought and coping is inconsistent. McDowell is right to say that all experience can be Named (is, therefore, *potentially* conceptual), but wrong to say that un-Named actions are not part of experience or agency. That when we *do* Name them they become part of a normative system is uncontentious, because Naming just *is* that process. But to hold that the Name could be before the act is to fall into what Carman calls the 'Scholastic Fallacy': the "illicit projection of the structure and content of reflection into unreflective experience."[128]

What McDowell does teach us is that Dreyfus' talk of 'reflection' may appear a little too strong– reflection does not require stepping back and asserting propositions. Naming is a perceptual process, and can be as simple as focusing on something and saying '*this*.' These final thoughts will be expanded upon in the coming chapters. For the present, I will take these two forms of content, and provisionally term the linguistic, Named content '*conceptual*' for the purposes of this thesis. I will take a deeper look at the transition between these two forms of content in Chapter Three, but I turn now to clarifying their difference via a phenomenology of expertise.

[128] Carman 2013, p. 175.

Chapter Two
The Phenomenology of Expertise

In this Chapter, I examine the phenomenology of expert performance to provide support for the non-conceptual layer I posited in Chapter One. Expertise provides the ideal starting point, not only because Dreyfus' examples of smooth coping are drawn from expert practices, but also because they provide demarcated zones of 'body' and 'mind' in action together, and are therefore an ideal arena to test hypotheses about the place of conceptual content in embodied skills. Yet the concept of 'expertise' itself needs clarification if our search is to be fruitful. Dreyfus' phenomenology draws upon the actions of highly-practised masters as well as what he calls 'everyday experts'– any- and every-body who copes smoothly at mundane tasks like opening the fridge or crossing the road. In order to better understand what is going on in the expert's mind-body, it is important to be clear on the varieties of expert and expertise.

I answer these questions in this Chapter in two main parts. In the first part, I look at the features of expertise identified by Collins and Evans in their 'periodic table of expertise.'[1] They articulate a spectrum running from ubiquitous (everyday) expertise to specialist or contributory (esoteric) expertise. All expertise involves both 'tacit' and 'explicit' knowledge. 'Tacit knowledge' describes that form of knowledge where we 'know more than we can tell,' and I argue that it is equivalent to the non-conceptual content identified in the previous Chapter. I argue that the *experience* of enacting tacit knowledge– that is, of performing expert actions without drawing upon explicit propositions– is what unites everyday and esoteric expertises. However, Collins distinguishes between somatic (embodied) and collective (socialised) tacit knowledge, and uses the distinction to play down the parallels between embodied and socialised actions. Yet I emphasise that similarities in the *experience*, in particular the absence of explicit thought, and *performance* of tacit knowledge unites both kinds, and that the primacy of tacit knowledge (that is, non-conceptual content) is the central feature of all of the expertises on their periodic table.

In the second part of the chapter I turn to the major objection to this conclusion. Esoteric expertises can be so complex that some thinkers argue that they *require* explicit thought if they are to be performed at their best. Montero holds that esoteric expertise requires a constant, conscious striving for improvement, arguing that

[1] Collins & Evans 2007, p. 13.

Dreyfus is mistaken to extend the 'Principle of Automaticity' from the everyday to the esoteric. I reply by presenting a more fine-grained picture of esoteric expertise based on closer examination of its phenomenology, to argue that what we consider single 'expertises' are actually families of micro-tasks, which share the un-minded *moments* of action with gaps where explicit thought is unproblematic to the model. However, I conclude by arguing that Montero is right to question Dreyfus on his extension of the automaticity of everyday *moments* to esoteric activity. I argue that esoteric actions, performed 'in the *flow*,' while un-minded, are better characterised as *spontaneous* rather than *automatic*, drawing upon Heidegger's description of *Eigentlichkeit* and *Uneigentlichkeit* to articulate the difference.

2.1 – *Expertise*

in which I introduce philosophical conceptions of expertise, with a particular focus on the contrast between 'everyday' and 'esoteric' experts.

Literature on expertise has defined two broad ways in which we might be considered experts at a subject or task. These differ in how expert knowledge is understood, with the distinction made along the lines of Dewey's division of knowledge into 'know-how' and 'know-that.'[2] Goldman, for example, distinguishes between 'skill expertise' and 'cognitive expertise,' where the former designates mostly practical skills such as violin-playing, billiards or textile design, and the latter refers more to a knowledge of facts, concepts, and propositions, as well as how to apply them.[3]

Similarly, Collins and Evans, in their 'periodic table of expertise,' contrast “tacit” knowledge with “explicit” knowledge.[4] This distinction, however, is less clear-cut, as both kinds of knowledge are seen as involved in most kinds of tasks. The tacit is more broadly viewed as the background knowledge that enables expertise of all kinds, and is therefore involved in both practical skills and in more cognitive expertises, which themselves require a lot of tacitly-assumed knowledge in order to be mastered. Yet the core feature of tacit knowledge for Collins remains, following Polanyi, that it is not explicable, such that we can therefore “know more than we can tell.”[5] Crucially, tacit knowledge is unable to be expressed in terms of propositional concepts or rules, thus linking it to the non-conceptuality discussed by Dreyfus.[6]

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[2] Dewey 1922, pp. 177-8.
[3] Goldman, 2001, p. 91.
[4] Collins & Evans, p. 13.
[5] Collins 2010, p.4.
[6] Collins & Evans, p. 17.

On the other side, Collins posits an explicit knowledge, only in opposition to which the concept of tacit knowledge has any meaning. This explicit knowledge is manifested in all of the expertises he and Evans identify in their periodic table, together with differing degrees of tacit knowledge; 'beer-mat' knowledge,[7] for example, relies on a less dense support of tacit knowledge than the '*contributory expertise*' that marks the most developed stage of proficiency.

Here emerges a second axis to Collins and Evans' understanding of expertise. Along with the division into tacit and explicit, they identify a division between 'ubiquitous' and 'esoteric' expertise. As with the first, this division is not sharp, but it identifies an important conceptual distinction that must be incorporated into any account of expertise. Ubiquitous or everyday expertise comprises those activities we achieve skilfully, yet which don't necessarily require the kind of training that specialised skills need. Typical examples would include untaught skills like speaking one's native language, walking up stairs, or the distance-standing discussed in Chapter One. But Collins suggests it might also include skills such as balancing on a bike, or catching a ball– skills where the instruction, if any, doesn't explain to you what to actually *do* with your body. Collins calls this kind of teaching "coaching."[8] For example, we might tell a child to 'keep their eye on the ball,' or encourage them to look straight ahead as they wobble on a cycle, but the coaching doesn't in itself convey the bodily skills that are acquired as the child masters the skill.

An important difference between everyday and esoteric expertise is how we judge an expert. For many instances of esoteric expertise– ballet, for example, or musicianship– we have some pretty clear criteria about what makes an expert an *expert*– namely, that they can perform the tasks involved in the expertise, and perform them well. We might say an expert concert violinist can sight-read a piece by Vivaldi, but also that they hold the violin in a certain way, their fingers are positioned just so, and so on. Likewise, the success conditions for esoteric expertise are fairly clear. An expert violinist plays the piece well and without mistakes; an expert athlete wins lots of games (or at least qualifies for high-level competitions). With ubiquitous or everyday expertise, like cycling or chopping wood, however, the criteria are much less stringent, as to be an expert in this sense means only to be good enough to 'get the job done.' For although there are esoteric expert cyclists and even wood-choppers,

[7] As indicated in the name, 'beer-mat' knowledge is the kind of superficial knowledge one might pick up from a beer mat, that might enable the knower to do better at a pub quiz, but that lacks any significant application.

[8] Collins 2010, pp. 63-4.

who put great energy into perfecting their techniques, such refined techniques are not necessary to achieve everyday expertise. Thus, while your father-in-law might insist there exists *one* objectively most efficient way to chop wood, we can at any rate also imagine someone who has been successfully chopping wood for twenty years using a less efficient technique– although still efficiently enough to get the job done. They might be slightly slower or have chronic back pain as a result of their imperfect technique, but they are nevertheless an everyday expert; they perform the task smoothly to a standard that meets their needs.

This is the sense of expertise that is central to Dreyfus' phenomenology of coping, where what makes someone an expert is less the quality of their knowledge or technique than their *experience* as they act. Dreyfus and Dreyfus emphasise that the central criterion for expertise is that the practitioner does not follow explicit rules, but responds to the affordances presented by the situation.[9] At this stage, as I will discuss further below, the Dreyfuses do not distinguish between everyday and esoteric experts– a suburban cyclist's experience involves the same flexible responsiveness as a *touriste de France*, although within a less demanding context. To be an everyday expert, then, means to be able to get the job done as a matter of course– without attending to one's bodily movements, and perhaps with one's mind somewhere else. Whether the style or technique corresponds to that of an esoteric expert is secondary here; as far as everyday expertise is concerned, it is the practitioner's *experience as they act* which is important, and this is the key point I will come back to later.

There is an obvious parallel[10] between everyday expertise and the everydayness (*Alltäglichkeit*) discussed by Heidegger as he introduces readiness-to-hand in *Being and Time*.[11] Heidegger's everydayness is described as *uneigentlich*, conventionally translated 'inauthentic,' but more accurately read as 'un*owned*.' That is to say, there is a certain lack of ownership, or a kind of automaticity, to our everyday expert actions. As we have seen, it is the very mark of our proficiency at such tasks that we can hammer nails or change our car's gears with our mind on other matters. While *Uneigentlichkeit* and *Eigentlichkeit* certainly do not map perfectly onto everyday and esoteric expertise respectively, the distinction between owned and unowned actions will play an important role in our discussion towards the end of this Chapter.

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[9] Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, p. 30; cf. Dreyfus 2005, p. 63 [n. 32].
[10] And indirect line of philosophical descent, in that Collins developed his ideas on tacit knowledge through a reading of Polanyi, who developed his through a reading of Heidegger.
[11] Heidegger 1962, p. 422; cf. p. 76.

However, not all philosophers agree that everyday skills– precisely because of their ubiquity– ought to count as expertise. Addis, for example, finds it "odd to say" someone speaking their native language is an expert, and that it is rather the context in which a skill is used– and by implication, the explicit concepts one has absorbed as it is acquired– that decide whether a skill is an expertise as opposed to a general competence.[12] In one sense, this is merely an argument over terminology. And yet there is a deeper issue at stake. As I will show in more detail below, what everyday expertise shares with the esoteric is this non-conceptual, tacit element. Dreyfus argues for a continuum between esoteric and everyday expertise, holding that they are united by an ability to act 'in the flow,' with what he calls 'smooth coping.'[13] What makes the actions of esoteric experts impressive, he argues, is their accomplishment of difficult skills in the same way that our wood-chopper approaches their everyday task.[14]

What interests me here, then, is the *content* involved in experience of expert performance, starting with the hypothesis that the tacit knowledge discussed by Collins lines up with the non-conceptual content discussed in the first Chapter. Although we'll see in the next section that Collins distinguishes between the tacit knowledge at work in everyday expertise and the tacit knowledge involved in esoteric expertise, I aim to show that this division is overemphasised. If we instead attend to the form of content of the tacit knowledge in both kinds of expertise, we will gain a fuller appreciation of the significance of the tacit in our actions.

2.1.1 – *'Thought' in expertise*

in which I question the role of explicit, reflective – that is, 'strongly' conceptual– thought in expertise.

Expertise intersects with the Dreyfus-McDowell debates in questions over whether or not 'thought' is involved in expert action. Dreyfus' position is based largely around the claim that "thinking disrupts smooth coping," as he declares in his interpretation of the Chuck Knoblauch case.[15] It is worth pausing for a moment, therefore, and clarifying what is meant by 'thinking' and 'thought,' and their place in expertise.

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[12] Addis 2013, p. 330.
[13] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 356.
[14] There is also a more practical use of this definition: Many skills have such a broad spectrum that any definition of 'expert' is arbitrary. Is an expert driver one who has been driving for a certain amount of time, or one who knows *x* number of special manoeuvres, or one who can do those manoeuvres at a certain speed, and so on? By taking into account a practitioner's awareness during the task, we find a much more consistent understanding.
[15] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 354.

In Chapter One I argued that reflection is the process of translating something from the lower layer of content into the higher, and that thought is cognition in this higher layer. There is a tendency to associate such thought with propositions. However, I also agreed with McDowell that conceptuality need not involve explicitly invoking a Kantian 'I think...'. Merely pointing or focusing on something and saying '*this*'– what I have called Naming– is, I have suggested, an act of transforming content from one layer to the next, which for our purposes means conceptualisation.[16] Stanley and Krakauer have suggested that the same point applies to expertise. One can have expert knowledge even without being able to express that knowledge in propositional form. They ask us to imagine an expert yet punch-drunk boxer, asked how to fend off a southpaw. "*This*," the boxer replies, demonstrating with her arms how she would fight a left-handed opponent, "*this* is how you fight a southpaw."[17] In so demonstrating, the boxer performs the breakdown or 'Naming' described in Sections 1.6 and 1.6.1. Thus we see in accounts of expertise the same transition between layers we discovered in the previous Chapter, bringing with it the same question of translation from one form of content to another.

Stanley and Krakauer are talking here about what Collins calls 'tacit knowledge.' More precisely, they discuss what he calls 'medium' or "somatic" tacit knowledge, which is one of three forms of tacit knowledge that also includes 'weak' or "relational" and 'strong' or "collective" tacit knowledge.[18] Collins claims that only the strong, collective tacit knowledge is truly tacit in the sense that 'we can know more than we can tell'; the other two, he claims, are explicable at least in principle, and so do not capture anything essentially different from what can be put into propositions. Thus, for Collins, only collective tacit knowledge could be described as having a non-conceptual content in the sense discussed in Chapter One, while somatic tacit knowledge undergoes no translation of content. Stanley and Krakauer's boxer would be demonstrating knowledge that is in principle propositional, even if she is unable (for the time being, or ever) to actually express that knowledge in natural language.[19] By extension, Collins criticises Dreyfus' focus on the embodiment of skills, claiming that

[16] This point will be expanded upon in Chapters Three and Five.
[17] Stanley & Krakauer 2013, p. 7.
[18] Collins 2010, p. 85. 'Weak' or relational tacit knowledge is knowledge that is only contingently unexplicated due to social or practical reasons (Collins 2010, pp. 97-8), and so is not directly relevant to our discussion here.
[19] Similarly, in Chapter One I suggested that, while a chess master could explain after the fact reasons why she performed a certain move, this does not capture what was happening as she moved. In Carman's words, "reflection *rationalises*."

there is "nothing philosophically profound" about embodied tacit knowledge.[20] In this next section, however, I will argue that, by considering embodied knowledge as ultimately propositional, Collins downplays the *experience* of embodied acting which is the real point at stake. By ignoring this, he misses parallels between collective and embodied tacit knowledge. By taking these parallels into account, I argue, Collins ought to accept that the translation from non-conceptual to conceptual that he says occurs in collective tacit knowledge occurs likewise in the somatic.

2.1.2 – *Embodied knowledge*

in which I argue that the experience of tacit knowledge reveals that it has not undergone the reflective change of 'Naming', something Collins overlooks when he argues that embodied tacit knowledge is of a kind with the explicit.

It must be said that Collins denies that his understanding of embodied tacit knowledge is conceptual in the sense that it need have "something to do with propositions, or 'true and justified beliefs'."[21] Rather, like the case of the punch-drunk boxer above, knowledge for Collins is "demonstrated by the ability to do things."[22] When we ask whether a person, animal, or even a machine 'knows' anything, what we are really asking is whether or not it can perform the action in question.

> The human per complicated animal... is continuous with the animal and physical world. We are just like complicated cats, dogs, trees, and sieves. When [performing bodily actions] we are just complicated sets of mechanisms (which become mysterious only if we start to try to describe our experiences– to make them explicit).[23]

A sieve 'knows' the smaller rocks from the larger by its design, just as a worm knows edible matter in the soil by virtue of its own biological makeup.[24] More complex animals have finer powers of discrimination and a wider repertoire of actions, yet the principle, for Collins, remains the same. Somatic tacit knowledge can in principle be broken down into discrete actions that are expressible as explicit knowledge. Collins does not emphasise this to denigrate human (or animal) bodily abilities, but because he wants to focus our attention on the 'strong,' collective tacit knowledge that we acquire and use in social settings, and which he argues can *not* be made explicit in the same way as 'medium' somatic or 'weak' relational tacit knowledge. However, I will

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[20] Collins 2010, p. 117; cf. p. 148.
[21] Collins 2013b, p. 413.
[22] *Ibid*.
[23] Collins 2010, p. 104.
[24] *Ibid*, p. 77.

argue below that emphasising this difference neglects a shared similarity that I take to be tacit knowledge's most important feature– its *experience* as non-conceptual.

Collins argues that embodied knowledge is ultimately propositional by dissecting Polanyi's example of riding a bike.[25] Polanyi took riding a bike to be the example of tacit knowledge– 'knowing more than we can tell'– *par excellence*.[26] When we ride a bike, we are constantly adjusting our body in all kinds of subtle ways so as to keep upright. We don't explicitly learn any of these adjustments, and if we try to consciously isolate and attend to those movements, we are more likely to fail and fall off. This kind of observation plays a crucial role in Dreyfus and Dreyfus' model of skill acquisition, and, we have seen, is central to Hubert Dreyfus' thesis that smooth coping is non-conceptual. Yet Collins is unconvinced by this example. He first makes an important distinction between bike-balancing and bike-navigation, both of which form a part of everyday human cycling. This allows us to differentiate between the mostly somatic knowledge that we use in staying upright and steering on the bike, and the social knowledge that is involved in getting by in traffic, knowing where and where not to manoeuvre our bikes. Collins wants to refocus our thinking onto the social, collective tacit knowledge, but I will argue he does this at the unnecessary expense of the somatic.

Collins cites the fact that machines have been made that can balance on a bike using gyroscopic technology, thereby asserting that our ability can essentially be reduced to an analogous series of mechanistic actions. He continues with a thought experiment, in which he aims to show that the tacit knowledge we use in cycling could straightforwardly be made explicit. Collins claims that, as the gyroscopic machine is explicable in principle, the only reason bike-balancing tacit knowledge seems inexplicable is because our brains don't run fast enough to explicate our activity in real time. But suppose we were learning to cycle on an asteroid. Here the low gravity would mean that we probably *could* learn to bike-balance using more explicit knowledge, in the way we might programme a machine– lean forward, lift your leg, tilt your hip, and so on. In such conditions, Collins argues, there is no reason to suppose our body 'knows' anything different than our mind, and somatic tacit knowledge is therefore of a kind with explicit knowledge.[27] In the terms of the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, Collins would seem to take McDowell's side with respect to somatic

[25] *Ibid*, pp. 100-1; Collins & Evans 2007, pp. 26-7.
[26] Polanyi 1966, p. 4.
[27] Collins 2010, p. 100.

tacit knowledge, holding that no form of translation takes place in moving from tacit to explicit knowledge.

However, the really important difference between tacit and explicit knowledge is not a question of speed. It is rather, about the content of the action and *how* that action is *experienced* by the agent. When we take this into account, we will see that Collins overlooks a Dreyfusian translation of content that does indeed take place when somatic tacit knowledge is made explicit, or vice versa. Collins is correct to assert that we would probably learn to cycle in a different way if we tried it on an asteroid. We could follow step-by-step instructions, perhaps with a coach radioing us explicit commands about what to do next in order to stay upright. Yet this is just how we learn many skills here on Earth. Indeed, it is exactly how Dreyfus and Dreyfus describe the initial stages of skill acquisition.

What Collins doesn't consider in this example is what happens as we master a skill. It is not simply that we start following the steps more fluidly, but rather that we experience the entire task differently, no longer as a series of steps but as a single, fluid action. We no longer *think* about what to do next; we *feel* what needs to be done, and we respond immediately, without conscious deliberation. One proof of this, that Dreyfus likes to point out, is that it therefore frees up our explicit, minded attention to think about other things. We are cycling over the hill, dodging potholes, rounding bends, but we are thinking about our invitation to the barbecue, and wondering what kind of beers we ought to bring. Collins' error is to assume that because we learned to cycle more explicitly on the asteroid, we would not come to embody that skill as we do on Earth. Yet there is no reason to think that we would not. Once we had mastered asteroid-cycling, we would be able to do it, however slowly, in an absorbed, non-conceptual way. We could navigate the craters and the slopes, while having a radio conversation about what we were seeing, and wondering about the lights on the horizon.

This is not merely a qualitative difference in experience, although that difference marks our primary clue. In becoming embodied everyday expertise, our experience no longer draws upon the explicit concepts that were involved in our initial learning. As such, it makes no difference if that knowledge is *explicable*. As I argued with Dreyfus in the previous Chapter, such a change in content is not merely the implicit activation of what was originally explicit. Collins' conception of somatic tacit knowledge is mistaken, in that he claims it is merely an implicit manifestation of

explicit content. The relevant fact about somatic tacit knowledge is not that it *can* be expressed explicitly, but that any such expression requires a translation away from the content that is enacted with the non-conceptual awareness that Dreyfus calls smooth coping and that Heidegger called dealings with ready-to-hand equipment. It is this mode of awareness, indicating enacted tacit knowledge, that I argue makes everyday actions *expert* in the most important sense of the word.

Stone agrees that Collins' conception of tacit knowledge in expertise is improved by bringing it into line with a Heideggerian phenomenology of coping, since Collins took the concept from Polanyi, who Stone argues misread Heidegger in an important way.[28] Stone criticises Collins' and Polanyi's understanding of knowledge, not so much for its definition, but because Collins takes it to be our "fundamental relationship to the world."[29] Stone, instead, follows Heidegger in arguing that "knowledge and knowing are founded on a relationship with the world that pre-exists either our cognitive or our praxical relationship to it."[30] From this angle, the forms of explicability that Collins describes are third-person points-of-view that do not capture the tacit, but merely describe it in derivative terms.

Collins admits his knowledge of Heidegger is "sketchy," and Stone does grant that if Polanyi and Collins have been led to something fruitful in their readings, this may be more important than their faithfulness to Heidegger's text.[31] Yet Stone insists the oversight is not merely of "scholarly interest," but reveals that Collins, while disclaiming that he thinks of knowledge as propositional in nature, nonetheless belongs to the epistemological tradition that does.[32] From Plato to the early Wittgenstein, and including also McDowell, the point has been that even when we are not relating to the world *through* explicit propositions, the way of knowing that propositions capture forms our basic connection to the world. Anything else is mysticism, that we must pass over in silence.

Heidegger's project can be seen as an attempt to demysticise that world that (early) Wittgenstein passed silently over.[33] Understanding knowledge in a Heideggerian way, then, can help us see where Collins has not broken free from that tradition as radically

[28] Stone 2013a, p. 294.
[29] Stone 2013b, p. 419.
[30] *Ibid*.
[31] Collins 2013b, p. 412; Stone 2013a, p. 290.
[32] Stone 2013a, p. 290; 2013b, p. 419.
[33] One can also see the later Wittgenstein's work in the same way.

as he claims, as well as pointing the way to take his genuine insights further. Reading Collins through Heidegger also reveals just why some of Collins' claims seem so counter-intuitive. For example, it sounds strange to say that a sieve 'knows' the size of stones, but since Collins defines knowing as 'doing,' we can understand what such a statement means (although we might still dispute it). But if 'knowledge' is, as Heidegger aimed to show, founded on a more fundamental relationship with the world, the statement makes sense, although not in the way Collins supposes. The sieve *could* be said to 'know' the size of stones– although certainly not in any literal sense– but only against the background of *our* using it in one of the projects that forms our way of living. The sieve's 'knowledge' rests entirely on human being-in-the-world.

Central to being-in-the-world is *understanding* (Verstehen), Dasein's access to Being. Understanding is not merely a mode of cognition, but the very possibility of entities showing up, and showing up as significant.[34] Now, Collins argues that machines and computers (especially AI), and even sieves, have knowledge insofar as they are able to accomplish certain tasks, and it is unimportant whether these tasks are accomplished in a different way to how we do them. Yet even with our most intelligent AI, the success of their 'knowledge' only has any meaning against the background of the human projects in which they are involved; they have no *Verstehen* in and of themselves. As Haugeland says, 'computers just don't give a damn.'[35]

Hagueland's point, applied to Collins' story, is that Collins has misunderstood the Heideggerian criticism. Collins is right that it does not matter if a machine achieves something in a different way to a human; this does not change the outcome *for the human*. What matters is that the machine does not act *towards* a possibility; it just acts. Collins is wrong, then, to lump sieves, trees, animals and humans together. Sieves, we have seen, can only be spoken of as knowing or doing with reference to human projects. Animals, I will argue in the next chapter, do give a damn– at least to some extent, they act for a greater possibility, but without an awareness of that possibility *as* a possibility. But the point remains Collins has moved too quickly in equating our concernful understanding with the explicable, derived 'knowledge' of machines and the third-person point-of-view.

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[34] Heidegger 1962, pp. 182-195.
[35] Haugeland 1998b, p. 47.

2.1.3 – *Embodied and social knowledge*

in which I argue that Collins' division between 'somatic' and 'collective' tacit knowledge is too strong, as both involve non-conceptual content.

In discussing somatic tacit knowledge, I have so far focused on fairly mechanical expertises, arguing that our ability to explicate them is not reflective of the way we experience them. Collins calls these kinds of skills "mimeomorphic," because they can be learned via mimicry, or via the indirect 'coaching' that does not convey explicit bodily instructions.[36] For example, as we saw, Collins distinguishes between bike-balancing and bike-navigating. Bike-balancing is a mimeomorphic skill. We are not explicitly instructed how to stay upright on the bike and, conceivably, a chimp could be taught to do it.

Bike-navigating, on the other hand, is an example of what Collins calls "polimorphic" skills, which come with their own kind of tacit knowledge, 'collective tacit knowledge.' The emphasis in both these terms is on the social. Polimorphic skills are those skills which cannot be fully acquired by mere mimicry. They require an understanding of the social context of their deployment.[37] Bike-navigating involves all of the rules and conventions of getting about in traffic. It involves, therefore, a great deal of cognitive expertise on top of bodily skill. It is not merely knowing that red lights mean stop and arrows mean 'one way.' It also means knowing when to speed up at an orange and when to squeeze the brakes; it even includes knowing when it's okay to go the wrong way up a one-way street. Polimorphic skills are therefore tied into cultural norms. In Denmark, one can *never* cycle up a one-way street. In Italy, one finds a bit more leeway.[38]

Thus, polimorphic skills are not simply knowing the rules, but knowing how to *use* the rules. This is the kind of knowledge that Collins calls 'collective tacit knowledge.' Accounting for the content of collective tacit knowledge is a challenge for my account of expertise. On the one hand, it is more obviously conceptual– it begins from explicit rules, expressed linguistically. On the other hand, navigating within that conceptual domain is not so straightforwardly mechanical as with bodily skills. Indeed, Collins insists that only the collective is truly tacit, since we cannot reduce the knowledge to a series of rules or norms.

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[36] Collins 2010, pp. 55-6.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] Our smooth-coping within cultural contexts will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

This seems problematic for the story I have been telling. I have associated somatic tacit knowledge with the non-conceptual layer of content, since mimeomorphic skills, on the face of them, seem to involve less explicit thought than polimorphic, at least according to the provisional definition I have been using. Yet I will argue below that we can dissolve this problem by showing that the distinction between somatic and collective tacit knowledge is too sharp, as both invoke non-conceptual content.

Collins is right to point out that there is a vast degree of subtlety involved in collective tacit knowledge, although in some senses it is not clear– if we take actual rather than in-principle- explicability as our clue– that it is more tacit than the somatic, even if it is less amenable to schematisation. For example, we can imagine someone asking, like McDowell in the previous Chapter, 'why were you doing this…?' of both a polimorphic action, like our instinctive swerving in front of a parked car to let the traffic behind us pass, and of a mimeomorphic action, such as shifting our weight on the seat as we swerved. Here, I imagine, we would have a more ready answer to the first question, with the second possibly returning the 'I didn't realise I was doing that' of the lower layer discussed previously.

Yet the outcome is not important here, because the key point I want to emphasise is the lack of a substantial difference in the *experience* of both mimeomorphic and polimorphic actions. I argued in the previous Chapter that a signal of applying non-conceptual content was that we can accomplish the task with our conscious attention on other matters. We find this to be equally the case in both bike-balancing and bike-navigation– we stop reflexively at a red light, and just as automatically touch our toes to the ground before we lose balance. Similarly, we have seen how the act of reflection signifies a change of content, and so we can now see that the same kind of change is going on in the shift from tacit to explicit knowledge in both the somatic bike-balancing and the collective bike navigation.

Collins might object that we have missed his point that collective tacit knowledge is not normatively expressible in the same way as somatic. And it is true that some actions, such as riding up a one-way street, are not easily generalisable as 'if… then…' rules. But if we attend to individual cases, we find no divergence from the model of skill acquisition we have been discussing so far. Our first time riding up a one-way street may well involve explicit, deliberate judgements– 'there's no one around, there's room to pull over if a car turns in,' and so on. Yet if cutting up that one-way street becomes a regular part of our route, we will find the action assumes the same

kind of automaticity that we find in the popular example of arriving at work without any memory of the drive over.[39]

The content we seek, therefore, is that which belongs to the *moment* of the task– that is, the extended moment of the coping activity which dictates how entities show up to and solicit us.[40] The actions performed in these *moments* are enactments of tacit knowledge. In Collins' terms, some of that knowledge may be, at least in principle, explicitly explicable. Some may not be even in principle. Where to draw that line is up for debate, but this point is secondary to the experience of such knowledge in the *moment* of the task. And here we find again that the phenomenology of the *moment* is free from 'thought,' in the explicit, reflective sense.

2.1.4 – *Against disembodied knowledge*

in which I argue that Collins' contention that the embodiment of knowledge is secondary overlooks the way in which explicit or conceptual knowledge is derived from embodied experience.

Collins illustrates the difference between somatic and collective tacit knowledge with a story about Data, the android from *Star Trek*.[41] In one episode, apparently, Data wants to learn to dance. He studies a manual of dances and instantly becomes a proficient dancer, never putting a foot wrong. However, his skill quickly reaches a limit; he is unable to improvise. While Data is able to follow instructions to an enviable degree of exactitude, he has no sense of what counts as beautiful, as interesting, or as novel in a performance. Technically excellent, he has no 'spark.'[42]

With this story, Collins suggests that collective tacit knowledge is the truly inexplicable tacit knowledge, as opposed to the somatic, which is 'not philosophically profound.' In teasing out the difference between the two, Collins naturally turns to explicate the social dimension. For this, he draws upon what he calls 'Interactional Expertise.' This kind of expertise is almost exclusively cognitive. Collins uses the term to describe the ability to interact with 'contributory' experts in a field in which one cannot actually perform the tasks in question. For example, a music journalist might be able to carry on a fluid conversation with an artist about a piece of music technology he is personally unable to operate, or the manager of an astronomical project can co-

[39] This non-conceptual navigation of the social world will be expanded upon, and tied more closely to the experience of memory in Chapter Four.
[40] *Supra*, p. 26.
[41] Collins 2010, p. 123.
[42] See p. 82, below.

ordinate the activities of a large team even without the specific skills to work the telescope or deduce the composition of the bodies it is investigating. In both these cases, the interactional expert has considerably greater knowledge than a layperson. They are able to 'speak the language' of the technical expert, and in cases like the project manager, this expertise may even be essential in getting the other experts to achieve anything.

Collins devises several tests for interactional expertise, based loosely on the Turing Test for computer intelligence. A person can be said to possess interactional expertise if, in conversation with a contributory expert, they can pass themselves off as the real deal. What this reveals, Collins argues, is that the interactional expert possesses the same tacit knowledge as the contributory expert. They have 'learned the language' of the expert community, and absorbed its tacit practices. What this also demonstrates, according to Collins, is that an important part of collective tacit knowledge has no connection to the body. Since the interactional expert possesses tacit knowledge without actually being able to perform the skill, this tacit knowledge must be unembodied. Indeed, Collins goes on to expand on this thought to argue for what he calls the 'minimal embodiment thesis' of knowledge, maintaining that this form of knowledge would be sufficient for an organism or machine to pass as intelligent.

Collins' account is persuasive, but if we reflect back on Stone's earlier criticism of Collins' conception of knowledge, a potentially fatal flaw opens up. Once again, in this claim, Collins does not seem to consider that the kind of knowledge held in interactional expertise is derivative of a more primordial connection to the world. Furthermore, as Selinger points out, “by omitting developmental consideration of how humans develop linguistic competence or skill itself, Collins misrepresents how knowledge is acquired as well as what kinds of people expert knowers truly are.”[43] That is, Collins puts too much weight on the 'knowledge' and too little on the more fundamental understanding from which it is derived. Without a basis in this fundamental relationship, the knowledge held by the interactional expert, whether tacit or explicit, would be meaningless– would be related only to other concepts held in the language, what McDowell called, in another, not entirely unrelated, context, a “frictionless spinning in the void.”[44]

Heidegger called this kind of disconnected ability to talk *Gerede*, 'idle talk,' or as

[43] Selinger in Selinger, Dreyfus & Collins 2007, p. 723.
[44] McDowell 1994, p. 11.

Haugeland colourfully called it, 'bullshit.'[45] Words are used without any direct connection to their meaning as part of a way of living. In Heidegger's terms, the interactional expert does not actually have any knowledge; they merely "pass the word along."[46] The minimally embodied self that Collins posits is, rather than the expert agent, what Heidegger called *das Man*, an inauthentic and disconnected social totality of language and practices. While *das Man* is to some extent an intelligent 'knower,' the metaphysical as well as practical problem is that such an intelligence does not deal with *entities*. It repeats words, telling stories about stories. Of course, this is not to be dismissive of interactional experts. A music critic might share listening expertise with an artist, as well as having their own expert skill set that the musician does not possess. But it does suggest that, regarding the content of tacit knowledge, we cannot so quickly dispense with the body based on interactional expertise alone.

I have argued that both collective and somatic tacit knowledge are rooted in an embodied way of being-in-the-world that is experienced as prior to linguistic thought.[47] What is important about the tacit knowledge demonstrated in expert performance is the expert's un-thinking enactment of that knowledge, irrespective of whether it *could* be explicated (as Collins holds, in principle, for somatic tacit knowledge) or not (as he holds for collective tacit knowledge). It should also be emphasised that Collins does not intend the pairs of tacit/explicit knowledge or somatic/collective tacit knowledge to map squarely onto the everyday/esoteric expertise division. The categories involved are fuzzy, which is why Collins and Evans present their account of expertise as a 'periodic table,' allowing correspondences and divisions to be made within and across categories.[48] It would be expected, for example, that esoteric expertises require more explicit knowledge than everyday expertises. These differences are of the utmost importance to our understanding of expertise. All the same, in the second half of this paper, I will emphasise that the important element of esoteric/contributory expertise is actually what it shares with ubiquitous expertise; namely, its experience in a non-conceptual way.

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[45] Haugeland 2013, p. *x*.

[46] Though, with an accurate enough knowledge, the interactional expert's concepts would still map largely onto the world, to the point where they could solve problems. But this knowledge remains suspended in the world of words; even if accurate, it is somewhat contingent in how much it corresponds to the phenomena, which the interactional expert knows at best second hand.

[47] 'Prior' here is meant in terms of the action, not the individual's development. Rouse (2000, p. 19) discusses our use of language in a ready-to-hand way, raising problems for accounts that attempt to present coping as completely distanced from language. I will have more to say about this in Chapter Five. In the meantime, it is important to keep in mind the difference between *using* language, and the *objects* of language (which can be, but are not necessarily, simply words).

[48] Collins and Evans 2007, p. 13.

I have so far argued, with Collins, that there is an important distinction to be made in kinds of expertise, the everyday and the esoteric. I have taken his division of tacit and explicit knowledge, and argued that all kinds of expertise are marked by the primacy of the tacit. However, I have disagreed with Collins' emphasis on the difference between embodied (somatic) and collective tacit knowledge, arguing that both of them demonstrate non-conceptual content as discussed in Chapter One. While Collins argues that somatic tacit knowledge is explicable, he neglects the change in content brought about by reflection (again, as argued in Chapter One). Even if all somatic tacit knowledge is in principle explicable, and collective tacit knowledge turns out not to be, this disguises the fact that at the performance level, they are experienced in the same way. Thus, our discussion of expertise so far has revealed that both everyday and esoteric experts are those who enact unreflective, pre-propositional content.

2.2 – *Esoteric expertise*

in which I extend the argument that all expertise involves a non-conceptual form content by arguing that esoteric expertise, too, provides only a secondary role for explicit thought.

I have argued, therefore, based upon the forms of content discussed in the previous Chapter, that 'thought'– that is, propositional mental content– is not involved in *moments* of enacted expertise. This claim is contradicted by Montero, who argues that conscious thought is not only present in, but crucial to achieving genuine esoteric expertise. However, by carefully attending to her descriptions in the light of my argument, I will maintain that a conclusive argument *against* non-conceptual content in expert coping cannot be inferred from the evidence she gives. Montero's description points rather to a more complex interplay of contents during performances of esoteric expertise. While thought certainly does play a role in the achievement of complex tasks, this is a long way from saying that conceptual thought infuses every part of those tasks.

2.2.1 – *Automaticity*

in which I outline Montero's argument against extending the 'Principle of Automaticity' from everyday to esoteric expertises.

My discussion of expertise so far has been chiefly about everyday, ubiquitous expertise– the embodied expertise involved in such tasks as chopping wood or riding a bike. It may well be replied that even if what I have argued does hold for everyday expertises, esoteric expertise– expertise more traditionally understood as being

highly-skilled at a specialised task– is of a different nature. For example, much of what I have argued so far draws upon Dreyfus' contention that thought interferes with expert action. Montero calls this view 'the Maxim,'[49] or later, the 'Principle of Automaticity.'[50] She admits it has wide anecdotal evidence, and is indeed treated as a commonplace amongst athletes and performance artists. Nevertheless, she questions the assumption that we perform at our best when we are *not* thinking, and argues that, even if the Maxim holds for everyday expertise, esoteric expertise actually requires a good deal of reflective cognitive effort if it is to be truly expert.

In this section I will agree with Montero on some important points that both complicate the understanding of expertise I have so far argued for, and yet also offer opportunities to clarify it. I will agree that thought– explicit, cognitive expressions– does play a role in esoteric expertise. Yet I will argue that on closer inspection, what scholars describe as esoteric expertises are actually built up out of many smaller expertises, and that esoteric expert performance is comprised of overlapping layers of coping and thought. In an important way, I will maintain, the core of even esoteric expertise involves a state that, like coping, lies prior to or 'beyond' thought. Yet even granting such a role for thought, a final worry raised by Montero remains. Where Montero admits of un-thought actions, she shares with Dreyfus the belief that they are purely reflexive and automatic. Her criticism, therefore, is of Dreyfus' extension of the 'autopilot' of everydayness into acts of esoteric expertise, arguing instead that what is impressive in such performances is precisely the opposite of stereotyped reacting. A third possibility therefore opens up, a kind of being-in-the-*flow* that is experienced non-conceptually, yet is truly *spontaneous* rather than *automatic*. I will conclude by outlining this experience, and by briefly relating it to Heidegger's descriptions of *authentic* and *inauthentic* acting, descriptions which will prove of use to us in later Chapters.

Montero questions the belief that esoteric expertise accords with the 'Principle of Automaticity.' She admits that the Maxim seems to apply to everyday expertises– such as riding a bike or hammering a nail– where explicit attention to our bodily actions seems to draw us awry.[51] Her criticisms are rather aimed at those who, like Dreyfus, would extend the Maxim beyond everyday actions to esoteric experts, such as ballet dancers or professional athletes, “those generally recognised as experts in their

[49] Montero 2010, p. 106.
[50] Montero 2013, p. 304.
[51] *Ibid*, p. 305.

fields."[52] Although such a definition appears vague, Montero believes that most experts in this sense conform to the 'ten year rule,' where the journey from novice to expert is held to take around ten years of intensive practice.[53] *Intensive* is the key word for Montero. After we acquire everyday expertise, we tend not to engage in strenuous practice to improve upon it.[54] Thus while almost anybody within a short time could learn to bowl a cricket ball, few of us take the time or effort to develop that skill to the level of a first class cricketer.

Esoteric expertise, for Montero, is marked by a continuous desire to improve.[55] And, she continues, this highly-motivated attitude– called *kaizen* in Japanese– requires explicit cognitive attention if it is to succeed. One example of this, she says, is Tiger Woods, who, as the top-ranked golfer in the world, set about changing his swing where he saw room for improvement.[56] However, Montero also mentions that during the period he was perfecting his new swing, Woods had a "rather dismal string of games."[57] But she denies that this is support for the Maxim, saying that Woods' problem was rather that he wasn't yet achieving his desired swing.

This comment is particularly revealing. Montero resists a Dreyfusian reading that would attribute Woods' "dismal" games to his conscious thinking, not just because she wants to highlight the thought involved in expert actions, but also because that would make him a 'novice' at his own swing, even though he is undoubtedly an expert in the game of golf.[58] Montero is wary of following through on this logic because there would be "very few experts left," since true experts for her, as we have just seen, are always striving to improve and hence always in a sense beginning again.[59] Yet this point, I will now explain, raises a problem not only for Montero's definition of expertise, but also for the concept of esoteric expertise itself.

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[52] *Ibid*.
[53] Montero 2010, p. 106. Another commonly-held aphorism is the '10,000 hour rule,' which holds that anyone can become expert at any skill if they put in that amount of practice. Spaced over a decade, this would involve intensive practice of 2-3 hours *every* day, suggesting the same dedication to improvement that Montero wants to emphasise.
[54] Montero 2013, p. 305.
[55] *Ibid*, p. 303.
[56] Montero 2010, p. 116. Montero later, with Toner and Moran (in Toner *et al.* 2015: p. 1133) gives a similar account based on the more recent experience of Martin Kaymer. In the most important respects– changing stroke at the height of professional achievement, the following 'slump,' and eventually surpassing the original excellence– the two cases are parallel, and, I hold, further support my interpretation.
[57] Montero 2010, p. 116.
[58] *Ibid*, p. 120 [n. 20].
[59] *Ibid*.

Woods' dry spell as he worked on his new swing reveals problems with Montero's definition of expertise, opening a space to question the usefulness of trying to understand expertise in this way. I suggested above that the real mark of expertise should be the expert's *experience* as they act. In that case, Woods– while still an expert at the broader skill-set of golf– was certainly *not* an expert at the *micro-task* of his new swing. We find here a certain ambiguity in the term 'expert,' where it can be applied both to the practice of a specific technique (say, a certain golf swing), and to the overall portfolio of skills ('golf') of which the technique in question is an important, relevant, yet perhaps not strictly necessary element (Woods was a PGA champion before he developed his new swing). The second use of 'expert' is the most common and generally most useful, as we certainly don't want to suggest Woods is not an expert because he doesn't win every game. But as we continue, it will be important to recognise that, even within a domain, experts-as-people bear a certain 'family resemblance' to one another with regard to their particular expert micro-skills.[60] Regarding examples of skill refinement like Woods' new swing, Dreyfus and Dreyfus' stages of skill acquisition apply *within* the expert's game.[61] While Woods remained an expert at most aspects of golf, his learning process involved once again focusing on aspects of his technique and practising them until he had embodied them– which was proven as he put his perfected technique into practice and started winning tournaments again.

This grates against Montero's distinction between everyday and esoteric expertise. Montero rightly points out that driving is an everyday expertise for most of us because, once we've mastered it to an adequate degree, we tend not to apply any *kaizen* to continued improvement (this goes for most of our skills, from cooking to driving to singing– unless we really develop a passion for something, most of us, for better or worse, content ourselves with 'good enough').[62] Yet the difference between an expert cook or driver and an everyday one is simply that on achieving expertise– in Dreyfus' sense of embodied coping– to an everyday level, esoteric experts use that skill as a foundation on which to build more refined skills, a process which in many ways mirrors the journey from novice to expert all over again. Toner, Montero and Moran emphasise the role of mindedness in continuous improvement, citing work that shows

[60] We can also imagine someone who could be an expert in the first sense without ever achieving expertise in the second– say, someone who mastered Woods' swing without ever bothering learning to putt.
[61] Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, pp. 19-35.
[62] Montero 2013, p. 305.

that expert athletes must "experiment with and research" their bodies.[63] Yet this attention to aspects of an existing skill presupposes its previous mastery. Expert athletes and performers need first to have developed a skill to the point where they have absorbed it as Dreyfus and Dreyfus maintain. Only then, by bringing thought back to the skill, can they change the way they perform it– in effect, learning a new form of that skill, the process of which, as Woods' case above attests, comes with a similar cross-fade of improved performance with diminishing thought.

This raises a second issue about our understanding of esoteric expertise more broadly. Most thinkers of expertise tend to speak of things like golf, cricket and ballet as tasks in and of themselves. And yet, as far as the phenomenology of expertise is concerned, these should rather be seen as emergent wholes built from micro-tasks. Cricket, for example, includes not only the different roles such as batting and bowling, but even within those roles we find a range of different expertises, which even the best players possess in different degrees.[64] And most importantly, these micro-tasks are not performed continuously, but tend to manifest in relatively short bursts. In games such as cricket, the gaps between the truly expert micro-tasks of bowling, catching, running, and so on, are so long that to assert there is thought within the gaps is a truism. Thus, while Toner, Montero and Moran argue that golfers think several steps ahead as they "design" a shot for a particular situation, it does not follow that such thought is present in the actual shot itself.[65] Dreyfus would claim that to continue explicit thought into the micro-task of hitting the ball would be disruptive. Furthermore, he would claim that the kind of planning performed by the expert would be different than that of the novice– rather than applying rules, the expert would "directly see" what the situation calls for; the wind, the slope, the grain of the green would all solicit a response, rather than be calculated into a decision.[66]

Even in more flowing activities such as dance or basketball, there are certainly gaps– even if only of a matter of instants– between actions where explicit thought could make an appearance. Our question, rather, needs to be whether there is thought in the *moment* of performing the expert micro-tasks. And it is not clear that the examples of thought within esoteric expert performance we have seen so far are anything other than thoughts arising in these gaps. Montero, for example, draws upon her own

[63] Toner *et al.* 2015, p. 1128.
[64] Compare Brian Lara's cover drive to VVS Laxman's flick.
[65] Toner *et al.* 2015, pp. 1135-7.
[66] Cf. Dreyfus (2005, pp. 55, 59) on the expert's direct perception of affordances. This point will be expanded upon in Chapter Four.

experience as a ballet dancer to detail examples of explicit thoughts she and other performers expressed during performances. A dancer might carefully attend to a mark on the floor, or they might will commands such as "I *am* going to nail that coming balance."[67] Yet such thoughts seem clearly to belong to the gaps in the flow. As a dancer mentally prepares for a balance, they may be performing a more routine stage-crossing in a quite automatic way, just in the way we might routinely and automatically change the gears in our car as we mentally prepare to round the difficult bend we see further ahead. Yet this does not make the execution of the balance any more 'minded' (although in the final section of this Chapter I will discuss a possible difference in the experienced '*flow*' of the balance when compared with routine moves).

These gaps, then, can also be layered over more 'automatic' coping, revealing side-by-side cognitive processes, such as the way, as Pike holds, that a jazz soloist's active decisions presuppose a "smooth, almost automatic" use of their instrument.[68] Our phenomenology thus reveals that while thought *is* involved in esoteric expertise, it is restricted either to gaps *between moments* of coping, or in gaps *over moments* of automatic performance. So far, this is not inconsistent with the Maxim that thought interferes with truly expert action, for the micro-tasks the thinking sits over (the stage-crossing, for example) are separate from the micro-tasks the thought refers to (the balance). It would also be likely that thought could only appear over *moments* that are less difficult and more automatic– thus while a dancer may well think of his balance as he crosses the stage, it would be surprising to learn that he was thinking of crossing the stage during the *moment* of his difficult balance.[69] We can therefore see that, in this way, esoteric expertises like ballet themselves contain micro-tasks that can have an everyday character or an esoteric one– characterised now by whether it is possible for the thinker to employ explicit thought over their *moments*.

I will focus more on the difference between these *moments* of coping in the next section. But initially, they raise a further argument that esoteric coping involves thought in a way that automatic, everyday coping does not. Montero claims that explicit, linguistic thought is an inextricable part of the very *moment* of performing difficult esoteric actions. She recalls whispering phrases like 'stretch-lift-whoosh' to

[67] Montero 2013, pp. 312-3.
[68] Pike 1974, p. 94, n. 6.
[69] That said, another version of the Maxim holds that one should think of something else while engaged in a particularly difficult bodily action, although, as I argue below, the best performances come from a state of intense concentration, albeit one that does not involve thought in the way Montero claims.

herself during performances, in order to keep her focus right there in the *moment* of a sequence of movements and expressions.[70]

Sutton, however, draws a distinction between these kinds of explicit phrases and maxims, and 'thought' in the fuller, explicit sense in which it has been used so far. He calls such phrases "instructional nudges," following sociologist and jazz pianist David Sudnow who– before he had mastered the art of jazz improvisation– was often frustrated by his teacher's apparently empty 'nudges' like 'sing while you're playing,' or 'go for the jazz.'[71] These 'nudges' do not belong to the 'gaps,' being not "merely a preparatory tactic in the quiescent peacetime between periods of mindful activity," but become part of the action themselves.[72] Like 'stretch-lift-whoosh,' such phrases are meaningless except as tied together with the practised, embodied skill. Once one has mastered the skill, however, these nudges can be used as prompts to hold oneself within the embodied *moment*. Sudnow calls instructional nudges "quasi-worded reflexive spark"s, which suggests that they are not fully abstractions, but nevertheless touch on explicit thought, as an instantaneous glance at verbal content that serves to orient the actor as they plunge into coping.[73] As Sutton puts it:

> the expert's occasional use of simple maxims like 'watch the ball' or 'get the feet moving' are not instructions sent from mind to body... instead they are themselves material symbols with temporary but crucial causal roles as a 'new fulcrum for the control of action.' Thus a complex bodily pattern or set of possible movements can be compressed into and partly cued by a phrase or memory or ingrained image, bringing the player back to, rather than away from, the well-learned habits.[74]

And again (with his colleagues):

> The function of the verbal maxim is not exhausted– perhaps no longer significantly affected– by its semantic content: rather, it operates in real time as a *material* symbol, an iterated an interactive self-stimulatory loop.[75]

During practice especially, but also during performance, it is easy to see how such 'instructional nudges' could assist an expert focused on constant improvement. Toner,

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[70] Montero 2013, p. 313.
[71] Sutton 2007, p. 773.
[72] Sutton *et al*. 2011, p. 92.
[73] Sudnow 1993, p. 147.
[74] Sutton 2007, p. 774.
[75] Sutton *et al.* 2011, p. 92.

Montero and Moran argue that 'nudges' "represent a form of mindedness because their adoption requires the performer to be consciously aware of the general feeling of their movement while executing a task."[76] Yet we must be careful to separate the nudges from the coping that is going on together with them. While 'instructional nudges' are thoughts in the *moment* of action, they are not embodied action themselves, for the action can be performed without the nudge. Instead, they serve to "sculpt and shape" our expert skills, rather like the 'coaching' that Collins ties to the learning of embodied skills.[77] In this respect, they are independent of embodied skill, having become an affordance calling for a response rather than explicit linguistic content. Importantly, the most effective 'nudges' do not involve an explicit tracking of the specific bodily movements they call for. Toner and colleagues themselves cite Mullen and Hardy, who found that "holistic process goals"– instructional nudges or 'swing thoughts' in golf that gave vague, concentrating commands like 'easy' or 'straight– led to better performance than "part process goals," which focused attention on particular body parts or movements.[78] This is consistent with what I have argued so far, that 'nudges' are not literal instructions, which is to say, they are not conceptual in Dreyfus' sense of explicit thoughts involved in actively monitoring action– monitoring which Dreyfus would regard as lapsing out of absorbed smooth coping.[79] Rather, as I will argue in more detail in Section 2.2.3 below, 'nudges' are used to focus attention *within* coping, dampening out explicit thoughts that might detract from the task at hand. Hence 'holistic process goals'– which evoke a *mood*– are more effective than the 'partial process goals' that carve up the task into isolated elements. For this reason, it is probably misleading to call holistic 'nudges' propositional, as their primary purpose is not to convey propositions in the explicit way that 'partial' nudges do.[80] Their real importance is to focus the actor and keep them 'in the zone.'

We can therefore identify two forms of mindedness that appear in esoteric expertise. Firstly, there is the thinking 'in the gaps,' thought that is expressed between or over *moments* of smooth coping. And there are also 'instructional nudges' which occur during *moments* as objectifications of practised action, used to prompt embodied

[76] Toner *et al*. 2015, p. 1139.
[77] Sutton 2007, p. 772; cf. Collins 2010, pp. 62-3.
[78] Mullen & Hardy 2010, pp. 276-7.
[79] Dreyfus 2007a, p. 357.
[80] As Wittgenstein (2009) pointed out, we should not let the fact that we use words to do things confuse us into inferring the presence of abstract linguistic thought (§11: pp. 9-10). On his account, the view that 'nudges' are explicit thought brings in an assumption that all language use is by its nature propositional.

knowledge in real time. Thus Montero is correct to assert that esoteric expertise involves thought, but her arguments do not stand convincingly against the Maxim, as the actual *moments* of action within the overarching esoteric activity have a content more like that of the everyday expertise discussed earlier. That esoteric experts are more proficient within a wider repertoire of embodied actions goes without saying, and is a direct result of their *kaizen*. Yet what marks that proficiency is their ability to smoothly cope at difficult tasks in the same thought-free way in which the rest of us approach our own habitual tasks.

2.2.2 – *Esoteric Awareness– 'the zone'*

in which I argue that spontaneous performances of esoteric expertise show them to be reflexive enactions of non-conceptual content, yet are as experienced qualitatively different to the 'automatic' everyday.

I have been suggesting that thought is restricted to the 'gaps' between and above *moments* of smooth coping. I have also identified 'instructional nudges' which are tied to and focus such *moments*. Yet in doing so, I have not fully taken into consideration another understanding of the distinction between everyday and esoteric expertise. This is that the form of awareness during our esoteric practice differs from the pure automaticity of everyday coping. Montero suggests this, but her answer finds the difference to be connected to thought, which I have argued is not pervasive in the way that she holds. In this section, I will argue that if we attend closely to the experience of coping, we can distinguish different experiences which do not rely on invoking conceptual thought to differentiate them, and instead reveal a phenomenological distinction in experiences of coping between the *everyday* and what I will call, following Csikszentmihalyi, *flow*.

We have seen that Montero emphasises the conceptual within esoteric expertise. But her major blind-spot may be the example at the heart of her account– ballet. Ballet is an extremely concept-heavy example, typically being precisely choreographed to music that is written to be played precisely each time. Even in the midst of the performance, as Montero says, the dancer must constantly be reflecting and checking that he is on the right spot, the right distance from his partner and the other dancers. He must be aware of which way to move next, as well as keeping in mind how a certain character that he is playing ought to feel at each stage of the story. While I have no doubt ballet dancers 'lose themselves' from time to time in their performances, my point is nevertheless that there are *so many* fixed points in the choreography that the dancer's experience must certainly be drawn into gaps of checking and reflection so

frequently that Montero is justified in her assertion that even an expert ballet dancer finds himself constantly stepping into the realm of thought. However, I maintain that this is no argument against an un-minded level that the dancer enters in his *moments* of action. As is also the case in ordinary human life, we slip from *moments* of smooth-coping into reflective thought and back again at incredibly frequent intervals– from one moment to the next.

A far better example of expert 'losing oneself in the flow' would be certain kinds of improvised modern dance and physical theatre (I'm thinking largely of *butoh* here, although many techniques would exemplify the point I want to make). These styles of dancing can be entirely improvised, without set choreography.[81] The expert dancer in this case masters a set of techniques for moving the body, which are then used in spontaneous movement, such that the performance becomes reacting, rather than reciting. The dancer responds reflexively to their environment, to the position of their body, their partners, the props and the stage, perhaps even the audience. Similarly, while Montero says that the addition of a persona gives the ballerina one more element of which to remain aware, the butoh performer's training involves character work similar to method acting. The goal is to *embody* the character and actually *feel* their emotions, such that they guide and influence the movement as much as the immediate environment does.[82]

As we see with the contrast between butoh and ballet, some activities emphasise the spontaneous more than others, with traditional western 'high' art seeming (for reasons that would be fascinating to explore but are entirely tangential to our investigation here) to prefer 'concept-heavy' forms. This cultural preference may bias a lot of thinking on the subject, as we find with music, where a traditional focus on classical styles may lead thinkers to suspect that musicians must be situated in a swirl of conceptual thought even as they play.[83] Here, however, one need not travel far to find a musician who can play a complex piece by rote simply through muscle-memory, with their mind entirely elsewhere. Similarly, playing along while sight-reading is not an obviously reflective process.

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[81] Or the choreography can be quite loose. The dancer may still have to move to a mark on the stage, yet this is not done via premeditated steps. Going into the dance, into character, the dancer lets the mark solicit them forwards– they are aware of it, of course, but not so much as an object of thought but precisely as the soliciting force that Merleau-Ponty (1963, p. 168-9) describes. The movement towards it, however, remains quite open.

[82] Baird 2012, p. 170.

[83] Similarly, Toner *et al.*'s (2015) reliance on golf as a core example also betrays a preference for a particularly 'concept-heavy' activity.

While these may fall under what we have been calling smooth-coping, a more interesting experience occurs when we turn to musical traditions with a large role for improvisation. Be it jazz in the West or the raga in the East, we find musicians who can play expertly at a new piece without rehearsal. Like butoh, expertise in such styles requires mastering a set of techniques to be combined spontaneously. Such musicians describe the experience of playing as one of being 'in the groove,'[84] "caught up" in a *moment* where ideas are "articulated as instantly as conceived. No lead time separates conception from expression, and the gap between intention and realization disappears."[85] Pike explains that this direct experience is more akin to perceptual seeking than to structured planning, with the emphasis on 'finding' the right notes or phrases, matching Dreyfus' classic description of skilful coping, where too much explicit thought about one's action leads to mistakes or 'losing' the groove.[86] Sudnow further emphasises the relegation of explicit thought to an 'observer' of his improvising hands, often surprising himself and thinking "look at that, that jazz just came out."[87]

However, the difference between 'open' styles and more rigid ones seems a difference of degree rather than of kind. Benson points out that precisely written pieces of classical music or ballet always contain *Unbestimmtheitstellen*, or indeterminacies, that the performers must 'fill in,' since, aside from vague notes regarding tempo, mood and so on, the score can never contain all the intricate variables of playing an instrument.[88] "Not only do performers have room for improvisation," writes Benson, "but also it is *required*," and he thus concludes that *all* musical performance involves a form of improvisation.[89] The same point surely applies to ballet, where there is room within even the most tightly choreographed piece for the dancer to make a part their own. Indeed, as we will see in a few moments, Montero argues that it is in how they make use of such leeway that the best dancers– the ones with 'spark'– distinguish themselves as true esoteric experts.[90]

Where Benson argues that classical forms of music contain more improvisation than we might first be aware of, he also holds that improvisation-heavy styles such as jazz

[84] Berliner 1994, p. 388; cf. p. 349.
[85] *Ibid*, p. 217.
[86] Pike 1974, pp. 88-9.
[87] Sudnow 1993, pp. 84-5.
[88] Benson 2003, p. 82.
[89] *Ibid*.
[90] Montero 2013, p. 314.

or raga are conversely "far more organised than [they] might appear."[91] It goes without saying that improvisation in such styles is no random sounding of notes, but is a skill involving intense study and practice, albeit one that– certainly historically, and probably even today– tends to involve a more practical form of learning, involving playing with and imitating experts rather than learning theory.[92] For instance, Berliner stresses the importance of jam sessions, of playing and improvising with other performers, and informal 'apprenticeship' relationships in learning to play jazz.[93] While such relationships also involve the transmission of formal theory, Berliner argues that the knowledge gained directly through playing is "as essential" to jazz as technical information; playing *jazz* involves getting a feel from other players for what counts as good.[94] This practical form of skill-acquisition, as Gallagher observes, has an analogy with Aristotle's *phronesis* or 'practical wisdom,' which can't be captured in maxims but is picked up by "hanging around with the right people."[95] Yet as Gallagher also emphasises, just 'hanging out'– or in this case, simply listening to good improvisers– is by itself not enough; the aspiring *phronimos*– or musician– must actively *imitate* the experts.

What jazz musicians learn from the experts, of course, are techniques. In this respect, they are not so different from a cricketer who, having mastered a repertoire of different strikes, demonstrates her expertise by performing the best one that each situation calls for. Pike describes the improvised jazz solo as a trial and error process where the player takes feedback from their own playing, interspersing *moments* of playing with gaps of explicit, conscious judgement and 'nudges' in new directions.[96] According to Benson, even "the highly inventive improvisations" of such a celebrated player as Charlie Parker "were actually composed out of about one hundred basic musical ideas, runs, and phrases."[97] He continues:

> As odd as it may sound, the musician who is most prepared– not only in terms of

[91] Benson 2003, p. 136.
[92] *Ibid*, p. 140, n. 25. Although most jazz practitioners come to jazz having learned the fundamentals of their instruments and basic music theory (scales, chords, etc.) in more 'rigid' styles.
[93] Berliner 1994, pp. 39-44. Similarly, the *guru-shishya* ('master-apprentice') relationship is central to Indian classical music, as the basis for the student's enculturation into an understanding of music that goes beyond pure technique (Neuman 1990, pp. 50-1).
[94] Berliner 1994, p. 41. Berliner (1994, pp. 56-7) even suggests that despite the rise of jazz as a formal subject in music conservatories, the importance of those institutions is less the explicit instruction they offer and more their role as a locus for bringing together musicians in an era where jam sessions and touring bands have become less common.
[95] Gallagher 2007, p. 211.
[96] Pike 1974, p. 91.
[97] Benson 2003, p. 137, n. 17.

> having thought about what is to be played but even having played various possibilities– is most able to be spontaneous.[98]

This planning, however, seems akin to the 'thought in the gaps' that I have argued pervades our smooth coping at extended tasks. As such, it tells us little about the experience of playing in the *flow* itself. It does suggest, however, that esoteric coping has more to it than automatic everydayness. As Sutton and his colleagues remind us, even our finely practised habitual actions like driving or playing sport require us to actively pay attention to what is going on.[99] Even though our actions may be reflex-like and spontaneous, if we are to perform well we must remain 'in the game.'

The spontaneity of improvised music and dance is significant, because it brings us closer once again to sport. Sports are unpredictable in a way that all but the most experimental of improvised arts are not, although like performance arts they always have at least a basic structure that constrains the possibilities of the actions taking place. These structures challenge the assertion that smooth coping is automatic and instinctual, and not merely because such structures must be learned conceptually before the game can even be played. Sutton notes a cricketing maxim similar to the Maxim, that a batter should 'play every ball on its merits.'[100] Like the Maxim, this advice suggests 'don't think, just do'– trying to decide in advance how you will play a ball will lead to being caught off-guard by the bowler, or to making a sloppy strike as you play the ball you were imagining, not the actual ball in front of you. Good cricket is supposed to come from simply reacting, not deliberate planning.

Yet Sutton points out that the best cricketers expressly disregard this sage advice. In the “crucial dying overs of a one-day game,” for example, when the batter knows her team's only chance of winning requires her to hit several boundaries, an expert player does– indeed, must– decide in advance, and intend to turn even an unfavourable bounce into a smash hit.[101] In a similar way, improvising musicians might decide that a piece needs to lift or slow, or come to an end.

Such factors do not apply only to 'open' or unpredictable performances such as improvisation or sport, but also play a role in more 'precise' arts. Perhaps Montero's strongest argument against the 'principle of automaticity' in esoteric expertise is that

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[98] *Ibid*, pp. 142-3.
[99] Sutton *et al*. 2011, p. 88.
[100] Sutton 2007, p. 775.
[101] *Ibid*, p. 775.

"a performance on autopilot… leads to doing the same thing in the same way."[102] For no matter how precisely a ballet or concerto is written, there are certainly differences in how such pieces can be performed. Countless tenors have sung Puccini's *'Nessun dorma'* in a technically excellent way, yet the public and critics alike judge Luciano Pavarotti's best performances as having something more. In a similar way, BB King tended to play very simple (technically speaking) guitar licks, often just a single note, yet they rarely sound flat or uninspired. Montero calls this intangible element 'spark,' and says that "performing the same piece in the same way day in and day out can result in a performance without spark"– and spark is what distinguishes the real masters from the also-rans.[103] Thus, while it seems perfectly possible that one could be a technical expert and just 'go through the motions,' there seems to be a kind of expert performance– one that is highly prized– that is expressly *not* automatic in this way. This leads to the question of whether smooth coping is best described by the 'principle of automaticity,' even though Dreyfus does make frequent allusions to the idea of its being on a kind of 'autopilot.'[104] Yet what really marks esoteric smooth coping is not so much its automaticity as its *spontaneity*. As I will discuss below, spontaneity describes the smooth, un-deliberative decisions taken during expert coping that, although they appear automatic and reflexive, are far from being stereotyped responses but are direct responses to the intricacies of the *moment*.

2.2.3 – Flow

***in which I account for the difference between everyday and esoteric experience as involving a different kind of awareness, which I identify with Csikszentmihalyi's* 'flow'.**

I have argued against Montero by holding that esoteric expertise is not distinguished from the everyday in containing explicit thought. I argued that esoteric expertises can be broken down into *moments* of micro-tasks, and that the thought Montero identifies appears in the gaps between these moments. Nonetheless, we saw earlier that while some micro-tasks have an automaticity that lends itself to being thought *over*, others maintain an intensity that seems less automatic, even while they are still performed in an immediate, reflexive way. And we have just seen that really prized esoteric performances have a certain 'spark' that distinguishes them from automatic reactions. This spontaneous acting *in the flow*, I will argue below, is distinct from the two poles exemplified on one side by the thoughtful acting Montero describes, and on the other

[102] Montero 2013, p. 314.
[103] *Ibid*.
[104] E.g., Dreyfus 2007a, p. 358; Dreyfus 2009, p. 54.

by the everyday coping that Dreyfus sees as its opposite. Such coping 'in the flow,' I aim to show, occurs when experts enter a different mode of awareness.

We find a description of this awareness in jazz pianist Bill Evans' famous description of the recording sessions for Miles Davis' *Kind of Blue*, the critically-acclaimed record that is still the biggest-selling jazz album of all time. He begins by comparing his art to Japanese *sumi-e* painting:

> There is a Japanese visual art in which the artist is forced to be spontaneous. He must paint on a thin stretched parchment with a special brush and black water paint in such a way that an unnatural or interrupted stroke will destroy the line or break through the parchment. Erasures or changes are impossible. These artists must practice a particular discipline, that of allowing the idea to express itself in communication with their hands in such a direct way that deliberation cannot interfere...
>
> This conviction that direct deed is the most meaningful of reflections, I believe, has prompted the evolution of the extremely severe and unique disciplines of the jazz or improvising musician.[105]

What Evans says accords with what we saw Benson say earlier. The improviser's training involves not only practising a technique, but cultivating a distinct form of awareness. Being prepared is not so much planning *what* one will do, but preparing *oneself* to do it.[106] Smith describes Miles Davis' style as composer and bandleader as creating a "ritual space."[107] He sought to create the conditions where his musicians would be in the right state of awareness to put their techniques into practice. One way he did this was to deliberately *withhold* information from his musicians, so that they wouldn't try to anticipate the piece and conceptually compose responses ahead of the moment.[108] Instead, Davis tried to instil an awareness that was bound within the *moment* of playing.

> Miles wanted a quality of attentive musical flexibility that would lift the players to the level of co-composing interpreters; one that would encourage them to respond to the improvisational moment with the same alert freedom that he did.[109]

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[105] Evans 1959.

[106] In Heideggerian terms, we could phrase this as: one doesn't prepare what *vorhanden* objects to create– *this* melody, for example. Rather, one prepares oneself to be able to cope with the *zuhanden* melodies one brings forth.

[107] Smith 1995, p. 42.

[108] *Ibid*.

[109] It is almost certainly significant that the New York bebop scene from which Davis emerged was

These states of focused yet open concentration seem crucial to high-level performance, and we saw earlier that instructional nudges, as holistic cues, seem to be used to induce this type of state. This form of awareness, like the state Evans describes, and that Davis seemed intent on evoking for his musicians, matches what Csikszentmihalyi calls '*flow*.'[110] *Flow* is based on what Maslow called 'peak experiences,' feelings of wholeness and transcendence achieved when one feels entirely absorbed in a moment or action.[111] Examples of *flow* correlate well with many of Dreyfus' examples of absorbed coping (a connection Dreyfus acknowledges although, we shall see, he does not distinguish the *flow* from the everyday[112]). A musician 'lost' in a piece, or an athlete 'in the zone' are experiencing *flow*, although activities as diverse as gardening or being immersed in a religious ritual could also be described as *flow*.[113] Csikszentmihalyi describes the phenomenology of *flow* experiences as follows:

> 1. a narrowing of the focus of consciousness on a clearly delimited stimulus field;
> 2. exclusion from one's awareness of irrelevant immediate stimuli, memories of past events, and contemplation of the future; hence a focusing on the unfolding present;
> 3. merging of action and awareness, also described as absence of doubt and critical reflection about one's current activity;
> 4. awareness of clear goals and unambiguous feedback, so that one knows one's standing with reference to the goals;
> 5. lack of concern regarding one's ability to control the situation;
> 6. loss of self-consciousness, which in turn may lead to a sense of transcendence of ego boundaries and of union with a larger, transpersonal system.[114]

There are certain common features between *flow* and everyday expertise. Most significantly is the focus on the present, which is exemplified not just in the absence

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saturated with heroin. Musicians actively sought an altered state of consciousness in which to perform, and the drug offers a short-cut to a trance-like state. Interestingly, and consistently with what I have been arguing, heroin-using improvisers do not credit the drug with any positive or negative effect on *musical* ability. Rather, they claim it facilitates a state of concentration in which irrelevant thoughts– "internal noise," as Charlie Parker put it– dissipates, so that one is focused only on the music (see Spunt 2014, pp. 39-42). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to make too much of this connection, it is a reasonable hypothesis that the *moment* I am positing has some relationship with the physical functioning of the brain, or more precisely, the inhibition of the pre-frontal cortex (which correlates with effects of heroin use; see Petry *et al*. 1998). The connection between drug use, the brain, and improvisation, therefore offers an interesting angle for future empirical research.

[110] Csikszentmihalyi 1975, pp. 36-48.
[111] Maslow 1962, p. 9.
[112] Dreyfus 2013, p. 28.
[113] Csikszentmihalyi 1988, pp. 30-1.
[114] Csikszentmihalyi 1987, p. 362.

of memories in a *flow* state, but in the different quality of memory that is retained from such a state. The absence of episodic memory[115] of automatic, everyday tasks is an oft-repeated example in phenomenological literature– our arriving safely at work with little recollection of the ride over, for example, is frequently given as evidence for smooth coping. Yet Bielock and her colleagues have highlighted a similar phenomenon among experts at tasks requiring a high degree of concentration, what they call "expertise-induced amnesia."[116] In a series of studies, they found that although experts were unsurprisingly better than novices at a given task, they were worse at giving an account of the steps they took to complete it.[117] They found that

> highly-skilled online performances are controlled by automated procedural knowledge that operates largely outside the scope of attention and is therefore substantially closed to explicit analysis and report.[118]

This was the case even when the experts were *told* they would be asked to detail their experiences after the fact, leading Bielock and her colleagues to conclude that "it is as if experts *cannot* pay enough attention to remember as well as novices" at a practised skill.[119] Sudnow recalls that his jazz piano teacher had a hard time reproducing improvised phrases, often not even being aware of having created the interesting runs that caught his student's attention.[120] "I'm not following rules so I don't really know what I just did," he would say when Sudnow asked him to stop, repeat, and explain his technique. "You have to have a feel for it."[121]

'Expertise-induced amnesia' supports the notion that the *moments* of enacted expertise are different from the gaps in which explicit thought arises. A similar phenomenon is found in the *flow* of intense ritual states, in which participants enter what Turner called a 'liminal' (or 'liminoid') space, which is frequently marked by a different quality of memory after the fact.[122] I will return to explore the connection

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[115] Episodic' memory (Tulving 1972, 1983) is the memory system that is experienced as a form of 'mental time travel,' allowing us to relive the details of our past experiences, and is to be distinguished from the 'semantic' memory of facts or the non-declarative memory of *how* to do something, which of course the expert has in abundance. Further to note 109, above, episodic memory is also associated with the pre-frontal cortex (Wheeler *et al.* 1997), and its absence or alteration in absorbed coping further suggests a link with the inhibition of that brain region, and an interesting lead for future research.

[116] Bielock & Carr 2001, p. 703; Bielock, Wierenga & Carr 2003, p. 305.

[117] Bielock, Wierenga & Carr 2003, p. 301-5.

[118] *Ibid*, p. 305.

[119] *Ibid*, pp. 309-10.

[120] Sudnow 1993, p. 25.

[121] *Ibid*.

[122] Turner 1979, pp. 487-495.

between memory and these modes of awareness, and their contrast with explicit attention and articulation, in Chapter Four. For now, the key point is the common poverty of episodic memory associated with both *flow* and everyday coping.

Another shared feature of the two states that will become significant later is the lack of self-consciousness. Once again, such a feature is taken for granted as a feature of everyday coping– Heidegger's original example of the hammer's readiness-to-hand emphasises that our dealings take place without a sense of being a subject at work.[123] There is just the hammering, and the network of equipment lit up by the task. Yet *flow* states are also characterised by a similar lack of self-consciousness. Csikszentmihalyi gives the following informants' quotes as exemplary of the *flow* experience:

> An expert rock climber: 'You are so involved in what you are doing [that] you aren't thinking of yourself as separate from the immediate activity... You don't see yourself as separate from what you are doing.'
>
> A dancer...: 'Your concentration is very complete. Your mind isn't wandering, you are not thinking of something else; you are totally involved in what you are doing... Your energy is flowing very smoothly. You feel relaxed, comfortable, and energetic.'[124]
>
> [Another climber]: 'It's like when I was talking about things becoming 'automatic'... almost like an egoless thing in a way– somehow the right thing is done without... thinking about it or doing anything at all... It just happens... and yet you're more concentrated.'[125]

It is significant that the final climber distinguishes between a kind of automatic reacting and an un-thinking 'concentration' that characterises the *flow*. This suggests a distinction between the smooth coping that characterises everyday dealings, and that of the flow, and it is to this distinction that we turn our attention in the final section.

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[123] Heidegger 1962, p. 98.
[124] Csikszentmihalyi 1975, p. 39.
[125] *Ibid*, p. 43. Compare Sudnow's (1993, p. 152) account of his jazz improvisation: “I sing with my fingers, so to speak, and only so to speak, for there is a new 'I' that the speaking 'I' gestures toward with a pointing of the music that says: It is a singing body and this I (here, too, so to speak) sings.”

2.2.4 – *Everydayness*, Flow, *and* Eigentlichkeit

in which I find a parallel between flow states and the 'authenticity' described by Heidegger, which broadly accounts for the different forms of awareness between everyday and esoteric practice.

Our phenomenology of expertise has complicated the picture of smooth coping we have seen so far. While I have argued that Montero is wrong on the pervasiveness of thought in esoteric expertise, she is right to distinguish everyday coping from expert performance. Dreyfus, on the other hand, moves too quickly in his comparison of an expert athlete 'in the zone' with everyday activities. Yet nevertheless, the parallels between everyday and *flow* coping are too strong to separate them completely. What, then, is the difference between automaticity and spontaneity?

I earlier suggested that there was a parallel between the everyday expertise we have been discussing, and the 'everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*) that Heidegger says characterise our actions. Everyday actions, for Heidegger, are *uneigentlich*– they are 'inauthentic' or *un-owned*.[126] Heidegger disclaims a moral element to inauthenticity, even where it is clear that he thinks authenticity is something we should strive for. Inauthenticity is a fact for Dasein; it is a natural state, and one to which we inevitably return.[127] Thus, we should not judge it negatively, but all the same, *Eigentlichkeit* is viewed as a positive overcoming of this everyday state.

Our everyday skilled actions– our hammering, driving, hill-walking– have a sense of *Uneigentlichkeit*. We do not *own* them, but do them as 'one' does them, as *das Man* does them. And, I submit, any action in which we have achieved a level of (everyday) expertise– that we can do automatically– we do in this un-owned way. Ratcliffe describes this mode of acting as 'letting the world do the work.'[128] Performance requires no special effort of concentration, because we can let go of responsibility by acting 'as we've always done,' without the need to focus ourselves on creating a unique event. Our esoteric expertises, on the other hand, when we are immersed in the *flow*, are *eigentlich*– we *own* them. When we are fully absorbed in an activity, 'in the zone,' the experience takes on a different character, one where we are absorbed to the exclusion of any other activity, and of thought as well.

Eigentlich flow, therefore, is a state of concentration that marks the experience of

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[126] Heidegger 1962, p. 222.
[127] *Ibid*, p. 220.
[128] Ratcliffe 2007, p. 73.

esoteric expertise. It is not the expertise itself– a practitioner still requires the skill or *techne* if we are to consider them truly expert; *flow* on its own is not enough. However, the experience of *flow* by esoteric experts belies their claim that mindedness/explicit thought is pervasive in esoteric expertise, by demonstrating how their performance can be 'mind-less' without being automatic. Furthermore, although I have associated *Eigentlichkeit* with esoteric expertise and *Uneigentlichkeit* with the everyday, there is no sharp dividing line between which activities can be authentic and which inauthentic. Even for an esoteric expert, *uneigentlich* performances may be more or less frequent. A great dancer or musician can slip out of the *flow* and fall back on more automatic routines. Even an improviser can slip between the two modes. As Pike says of the jazz improviser:

> If his search is fruitful the tonal images flow along freely without interruption. If some impeding factor arises, his inspiration may lag or lapse. At this point free productive imagery gives way to stereotyped, reproductive patterns, which are drawn from the fund of his previous jazz experience.[129]

In the same way, an expert martial artist fighting a novice opponent, or a lecturer giving the same talk as last year and the year before, might find themselves 'going through the motions,' falling back on habitual moves or stock phrases in an automatic way. Most activities that we can do authentically, we can do inauthentically, although it seems likely we need to master them authentically first– which would account for the gradually-diminishing 'buzz' we get from repeating an activity we have mastered.[130] While some particularly challenging activities might perhaps only be achievable in a state of *flow*, the story of the jaded performer, no longer with any 'spark,' is a familiar one.

On the other hand, we need not restrict *Eigentlichkeit* to professional-level practices. While a rally car driver perhaps *must* be 'in the zone' to successfully complete a course, she might also initiate the same form of concentration when driving to the beach.

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[129] Pike 1974, p. 90. Berliner (1994, p. 217) notes that accomplished jazz soloists always have 'crips' or stock patterns as backups when inspiration is slow. He quotes trumpeter Tommy Turrentine: "A crip is like a crutch. It's like a brace or bridge from one idea to another. Bird [Charlie Parker] might rip off something real mean and then play a crip. And after that, he'd come out of the crip, and he'd rip off something real mean again."

[130] Csikszentmihalyi (2002, pp. 155-7) compares the experiences of surgeons who find their work exhilarating and addictive to those for whom it has become a repetitive "drudgery." He ties a lack of challenge to dissatisfaction with even a prestigious job like surgery, suggesting that, having mastered their skill to the point where they can perform it automatically (and hence, inauthentically), they no longer get a feeling of *flow* from their work.

Although 'one' doesn't normally garden, cook, sweep, or climb stairs in the *flow*, it is possible to perform everyday activities with a cultivated awareness. The practices of Taoism and Zen Buddhism, for example, with their frequent celebration of the mundane, seem designed to cultivate such an awareness, which can be brought to any activity.[131]

The difference between *owned* and *unowned* actions is connected to the role of thought, although not in the way that a thinker like Montero might have suggested at the beginning of this chapter. Her hypothesis was that, while everyday actions are indeed automatic, esoteric expertise is characterised by the presence of explicit thought. I have argued, however, that the explicit thought in esoteric expertise is only present in the gaps between *moments*, and that *moments* of *flow* are thought-free in the manner of the everyday– except that they are *owned*. Yet being *owned*, I argue, makes them even *more* thought-free. For the differentiation of *unowned*, everyday actions seems to be that we can quite easily think over the top of them. Whether it's the lecturer 'going through the motions,' the jazz musician falling back on stock phrases, or me on my cycle on the way to the barbecue, our *minds* are present and thinking– only not really on the task we're immersed in. What characterises the authentic expert is that their mind is right there on the action– or, perhaps more accurately, their mind is not there at all. They have 'lost themselves' in the *flow*.

That is to say, automatic, unowned actions allow explicit thinking over the top because they involve a less intensive concentration than owned actions, even if, from the outside, owned actions appear just as automatic. As Csikszentmihalyi puts it:

> Although the flow experience appears to be effortless, it is far from being so. It often requires strenuous physical exertion, or highly disciplined mental activity. It does not happen without the application of skilled performance. Any lapse in concentration will erase it. And yet while it lasts consciousness works smoothly, action follows action seamlessly.[132]

Such *flow* is admittedly a fragile state, and I seriously doubt that even the best experts stay fully immersed in it for the duration of a performance or a game. *Eigentlichkeit*, for Heidegger, is not a permanent state that one achieves, nor even a particularly common one. *Uneigentlichkeit* is our default mode, and one to which we continually

[131] See, for example, Dōgen's (1985) 'Instructions for the *Tenzo* [cook]' (pp. 54-8, 64-5).
[132] Csikszentmihalyi 2002, p. 54.

slip back. Even where experts have rituals, 'nudges,' or other techniques to induce the right state of concentration, it remains easily broken. Thoughts may creep in, or one might lose the groove, in which case the real experts will have stock patterns to fall back on, and to relax back into the *flow*.[133] Yet this fact does not diminish the phenomenal reality of the *flow* state.

Dreyfus is therefore wrong to equate expert acting in the *flow* with everyday expertises, even though we have seen that some esoteric experts, having mastered their skills, may perform them in an automatic, unowned way, while ordinary folk may perform our everyday tasks in the owned *flow*. Montero is therefore correct to distinguish esoteric expertises, those with *kaizen* and 'spark,' from the 'principle of automaticity.' However, I have argued that in doing so, she has not shown that the reason for this is their use of explicit thought in the *moments* of action.

Conclusions

I have argued in this Chapter that expertise is characterised by the *experience* of enacting non-conceptual content. I have argued this in two ways. In the first half of the Chapter, I argued that different forms of expertise– everyday and esoteric– are united by the predominant role of tacit knowledge, which phenomenologically corresponds to the non-conceptual layer of the previous Chapter. I argued that Collins overemphasises the distinction between the embodied (somatic) and the social (collective) forms of tacit knowledge when he claims that the former, unlike the latter, undergoes no translation in becoming the content of explicit knowledge. However, I argued that the really crucial relationship of tacit knowledge to expert performance is our *experience* of acting, and that the phenomenology of enacted somatic tacit knowledge reveals the same change in content that Collins claims for collective tacit knowledge. Such a translation in content lends itself to a Dreyfusian understanding of expertise as non-conceptual coping.

In the second part, I responded to Montero, who claims that esoteric expertise *requires* explicit thought in order to achieve its best results. I argued that everyday and esoteric expertises share an un-minded direct experience of the *moment* of action, yet I agreed with her that Dreyfus' extension of the 'Principle of Automaticity' from the everyday to the esoteric is problematic. Through accounts of sport and improvised

[133] Cf. Charlie Parker's 'crips,' *supra*, p. 88, n. 129.

performance art, I argued that un-minded *moments* of esoteric expertise, unlike those of everyday expertise, tend to be experienced as *flow*. Drawing on Heidegger's account of *Eigentlichkeit*, I argued that 'owned,' *flow* experiences are characterised by an absorption in which explicit thought disappears, whereas everyday *moments* have an automaticity that allows them to recede into the background, such that explicit thought on different matters can arise without detriment to the performance. However, I also noted that these relationships have a degree of contingency– esoteric expertises can be performed in an 'un-owned' way, while everyday tasks can also be 'owned.' Yet typically, our everydayness, as Heidegger observed, is *uneigentlich*, while our very best esoteric performances, as Montero holds, require a spontaneity that is more than reflexive automaticity.

We see in the phenomenology of expertise, therefore, evidence for the layers that in Chapter One I argued both Dreyfus and McDowell admit– an un-Named, tacit layer that is translated by Naming it as explicit content. Above all, our examination of Collins' account of tacit knowledge suggests that a translation must occur as we make knowledge explicit, and that the enactment of tacit knowledge has a different quality than the expression of explicit knowledge, even where tacit knowledge may, in principle, be formulable explicitly. Similarly, we saw in our discussion of Montero that the ongoing process of learning and improvement by esoteric experts follows the same process of internalisation and embodiment that Dreyfus and Dreyfus put forward. The thought that occurs in 'gaps,' or above 'un-owned' actions, gives further evidence for a separate, 'minded' layer alongside the direct. 'Instructional nudges,' too, point to an interaction between layers, as a phrase stands in as an abstract representation for a sequence of embodied coping. Thus, it appears, the layers of Chapter One have a fluid, and sometimes parallel, interaction. In the next Chapter I will focus on the transition between these layers, and investigate exactly what comprises the translation of content I have so far argued for.

Chapter Three
What is the Meaning of 'this'*?*

I have so far been arguing that human cognition is comprised of two layers that, while they may operate in tandem, can be analysed distinctly. I have argued that, although they diverge in important ways on the structure of content that they involve, both Dreyfus and McDowell admit of these layers. Another important difference rests on the extent to which such layers are shared with other animals. Schear argues that the debates should be read as centrally concerning the continuity of human beings with other animals. Understood in this way, McDowell's claim is that our rational or conceptual way of experiencing things creates a sharp break between our experience and that of other animals. Dreyfus, on the other hand, counters that the phenomenon of 'coping' shows that conceptual content is derived from a non-conceptual base that we share with other animals and pre-linguistic children.

In this Chapter, I will examine the differences between human and animal coping as they are discussed by Dreyfus and McDowell, as well as by Heidegger, to defend the view that non-conceptual content is shared by humans and non-rational animals, and therefore that the rational conceptual capacities discussed in the previous Chapters are not, as McDowell holds, pervasive. Firstly, I will argue that while McDowell correctly understands 'rationality' as our capacity to experience an object as an independent '*this*,' in so doing he glosses over its relation to a more basic, non-rational '*this*.' Finding parallels in Heidegger's 'theory of equipment,' I will use his phenomenological insights to establish how we can make sense of that basic '*this*,' concluding we will understand it best if we take ready-to-hand coping as a non-rational capacity that we share with other animals. I then deal with objections to this interpretation by showing how this capacity does not rely on Dasein's possession of a culture and 'world,' and that McDowell is not fully justified in using the 'world'/environment distinction against Dreyfus. However, after a closer look at what Heidegger called the 'abyss' between Dasein and other animals, I will moderate this conclusion to argue that while the content of both human and animal coping is not conceptual, they may yet differ in an important way, thus setting the scene for the discussion of 'post-conceptuality' in Chapter Four.

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3.1 – *Animal experts*

in which I outline the connection between the non-conceptual cognition discussed by Dreyfus, and animal behaviour.

As we have seen, Dreyfus' arguments for non-conceptual cognition are based on his phenomenology of skilled activity, where he argues that experts in various fields tend to perform at their best when they are *not* (reflectively) *thinking* about what they are doing. It is therefore tempting to equate our smooth-coping actions with the behaviour of animals, since a fielder chasing a ball seems, on the surface, to act with the same smoothness and immediacy as a cat chasing a mouse. Indeed, Dreyfus argues that the form of awareness in coping is shared among "animals, prelinguistic infants, and everyday experts like us."[1] But we have also seen that McDowell would respond that human activities presume initially learning concepts that are far beyond what we would hope another animal could learn.

It is important in this connection to stress with Dreyfus 'everyday' expertise. Focusing overly on the complex actions of expert athletes and artists when they are 'in the *flow*' seems to discount everyday activities such as climbing a steep path– activities that still require learning, but not necessarily in the same concept-heavy way as something like chess. But such everyday activities are precisely the sort of thing that the theory of smooth-coping– in its Heideggerian origins– was developed to account for. A preoccupation with 'experts' leads us to forget that much of our daily life is actually lived (albeit inauthentically) in a flow-like state, and that what makes the activities of experts so impressive is their accomplishment of difficult tasks with the same non-rational reacting that most of us employ only on mundanities like crossing the street.

Following this line, Rouse suggests that animals ought to be considered 'experts' who exemplify smooth-coping by reflexively accomplishing often complex tasks with a minimum of planning.[2] In the terms of the previous Chapter, then, we should rather think of them as 'everyday' experts who do not strive to improve but nevertheless 'get the job done' in a smooth and un-deliberative way. Most animals, to be sure, do not *learn* most of their tasks, at least not in the conceptually-loaded way that we learn the rules of chess or how to change a tyre. Yet they do seem capable of incredibly intricate everyday tasks, making them look so simple as to appear automatic, but in reality employing a finely-tuned discrimination of the highest degree. A horse that gallops

[1] Dreyfus 2005, p. 57.
[2] Rouse 2013, p. 252.

along a hillside, for example, is not just running but taking in its surroundings, avoiding stones, large tufts and other obstacles, judging the depth of pools and leaping over the larger ones.

Likewise, it appears that a dog playing frisbee in a park must have *some* concept of the frisbee– in Taylor's 'minimal sense'[3]– shown by the way he chases it, drops it for you, and tracks it as you wave it before his nose. During the chase, he seems to be finely tuned to his environment as he runs down the slope, avoiding park benches, other walkers, and scary-looking dogs. This kind of reflexive yet complex smooth coping appears very similar to our own experience of running after a frisbee. And yet, we shall soon see, McDowell insists that our experience is completely other, and that even our simple actions are pervaded with strong-concepts and rationality in a way that the dog's could never be. In the following section, I will elaborate on what McDowell means in his claim that humans use 'strong-concepts' even within the action of smooth-coping– thereby exploring the ambiguous, first-floor layer we saw in Chapter One– before exploring Dreyfus' alternative of a non-conceptual (or as Taylor might say, minimally conceptual) awareness that we might share with the other animals.

3.2 – *Animals, reasons, and rationality*

in which I discuss McDowell's conception of the 'Rational Animal', finding his understanding of rationality rooted in the experience of a 'this' that is unavailable to the animal.

Schear frames the Dreyfus-McDowell debate in terms of the 'Venerable Thesis'– *homo est animale rationale*: humans are to be understood in terms of their rationality, with rationality here, as we saw in Chapter One, understood by both Dreyfus and McDowell in terms of conceptual capacities.[4] Schear spells out three possible outcomes. Firstly, it could be false; we might be contingently rational creatures who would still be recognisably human without a 'strong' rational capacity. Neither Dreyfus nor McDowell support this possibility. Secondly, a 'weak' form of the Thesis may be true. That is, rationality may be a central feature of the human, but it is only *one* of our capacities; no matter how important conceptual understanding is, there is a significant sphere of our life to which it does not apply. This seems to be Dreyfus' position. Thirdly, we find the 'strong' Venerable Thesis, that rationality "is the form of the human as such," in which rationality is understood to pervade and to be involved

[3] *Supra*, p. 17.
[4] Schear 2013, pp. 285-6.

in all human activity, even that which does not seem to fit an understanding of rationality as 'reflective thought' or 'reason-grounded decision.'[5] McDowell appears "committed" to this reading.[6]

McDowell illustrates his point with the frisbee-catching example I alluded to in Chapter 1.7. Imagine you are playing frisbee with your dog in the park, when another person (let's call her Sally) wanders through the game. The frisbee sails in her direction, and spontaneously, she reaches out and catches it– a perfect example of what Dreyfus would call smooth-coping. McDowell fully grants that there is no reflective thought involved in this scenario. If asked for a reason *why* she just did what she did, he suggests, she would be lost for words. "No particular reason," she might reply, "I just felt like it."[7] Nonetheless, McDowell maintains, her unreflective action was an exercise of her particularly human, rational capacities. Your dog, which might catch a frisbee just as spontaneously and effortlessly as our quick-reflexed friend, would not be utilising any similarly rational capacities. "In the relevant sense," says McDowell, "he has none."[8]

Although he doesn't say as much, McDowell here makes an important distinction that is easily lost in discussions of reason and rationality. In English (as in Latin) the root 'reason' (*ratio*) covers two concepts that are distinct in other languages. In German, for example, we find the word *Grund* for 'reason why...' (as in, our friend had 'no reason' for catching the frisbee), with *Vernunft* referring to the intellectual capacity. It is this second meaning of *ratio* that is at stake in the Venerable Thesis' claim. As Okrent points out, making a similar distinction between what he calls practical rationality and instrumental rationality, there is no controversy in granting animals *Gründe* or reasons *for* a certain behaviour– a wasp buries food *for* her unhatched babies, even if she could never be aware *of* that fact.[9] Thus, even though we might poke around for a reason for the dog to catch a frisbee (to impress you? In hopes of a treat? For the sheer delight?), we have already seen with McDowell's frisbee-catcher that the presence or absence of a clear *Grund* need not be connected to the presence of *Vernunft*.

It is *Vernunft*, this acting with *rationality*, that McDowell argues is pervasive in all

[5] *Ibid*.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 290.
[7] McDowell 2007b, p. 369.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] Okrent 2007, p. 110.

human activity, and hence does not require the reflective deliberation that acting for *reasons* seems to imply. When McDowell says reason is pervasive, he does not mean that we actively weigh up *Gründe* for everything we do or see. Rather, he is talking about the capacity that makes deliberating on such *Gründe* possible in the first place. But what exactly does this mean, this rationality divorced from reasons?

We find McDowell's answer in his discussion of the difference between the human's frisbee catch and the dog's. Suppose we grant all of Dreyfus' conditions for non-conceptual coping.[10] Sally is walking through the park. She is unaware of the frisbee, she is making no plans about it, no conscious decision to catch it at such-and-such a point. When it enters her visual field, she reacts smoothly, instinctively, solicited by the frisbee as a 'force' that draws her to run towards it, to grab it from the air.[11] McDowell even grants that perhaps she is unaware of herself as catching a 'frisbee.'[12] That is, we need not assume that she is realising the concept 'frisbee,' with all of its conceptual extensions and cultural significations.[13] Even if it were the first frisbee she had ever encountered, McDowell holds, Sally is realising in her actions the "practical concept" of "catching *this*."[14]

It is this '*this*' that holds the key to rationality as McDowell and I want to understand it. But what is so special about '*this*,' that we read out of it a cognitive capacity that makes us unique on this planet? Surely other animals– *some* of them, at least– can see '*this*' or '*that*' around them, and deal with it, in much the way that we do. Why is McDowell so insistent that the dog's catching a frisbee is so entirely removed from the human's? I aim now to explore this question, with a view to establishing the identity of the capacity for seeing-'*this*' with rationality.

Let us look at where we differ from the dog, and what we may share with it. John Haugeland constructs an interesting thought-experiment to highlight the difference in experience between humans and animals.[15] He asks us to imagine coming home to find all the members of our household have had their features switched around. Mother's head is on father's body, father's head speaks with sister's voice, and so on.

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[10] Dreyfus 2007, pp. 361-2.
[11] Cf. Merleau-Ponty 1963, pp. 168-9.
[12] McDowell 2013, p. 48.
[13] In so claiming, McDowell attempts to distinguish his 'world' from a merely verbally-articulated version of the holistic network of connections that Dreyfus draws upon when he describes non-conceptual coping.
[14] McDowell 2013, p. 48.
[15] Haugeland 1998c, p. 261.

If we were to confront such a scene, our first move would be to doubt our perception– 'I didn't see what I just thought I saw.' If the scene persists, we would continue by doubting our perceptual faculties– 'someone's spiked my drink,' or 'I'm losing my mind.'

Haugeland suggests that the family dog, confronted with this strange scene, would also recognise something was out of order. He would be confused, Haugeland suggests, and would probably bark.[16] *But he would not be able to doubt what he was seeing*. While the dog seems well capable of recognising individual people and has some idea, proven by his confusion, of how those individuals 'ought to be,' he cannot doubt what is presented immediately to his perception. The perception, alone, is fact.

Pippin makes a similar point with a less far-fetched example.[17] Say you are approaching your house from downwind. Your dog sees you while you are still far away and, not recognising you, begins to bark as she would at an intruder. As you get closer, and the dog perceives more features that reveal you to be *you*, she stops barking and happily wags her tail. This is philosophically interesting, says Pippin, because the dog's change in attitude is total and immediate. She is not embarrassed, or sorry, or otherwise perturbed for misidentifying you. She cannot be, because from the dog's point of view we cannot really speak of a misidentification. First the dog was barking at a person approaching; then she was pleased to see her master. Although she must have *some* idea of you as an individual unity– something familiar, to be celebrated rather than confronted– the existence of that unity *is* only for the *moment* of its perception.[18]

The key lesson here seems to be the tie between the animal's perception and the '*moment* of the task.' '*Moment*,' as described above, indicates not a mere instant of time, but rather the extended interval of the coping activity, and includes the network of relevant entities involved in the task, which take their significance from that task.[19]

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[16] Anecdotally, I witnessed something just like this one Christmas, when a friend handed around elaborate animal masks as part of a game at a party. The dog wandered in, was extremely confused, and the verbal reassurances from its masked owner only served to agitate it further.

[17] Pippin 2013, pp. 101-2, based, apparently, on his own experience with his dog Molly.

[18] There are senses in which the dog can be aware of a known individual thing in the absence of perception, but only via some connected stimulus– the place where you are normally found, perhaps, or some object containing your scent. There are some subtleties to be aware of, such as when the dog perceives the scent of rabbit who is no longer there. Here it would be more accurate to say that the dog perceives the rabbit-scent rather than the rabbit. But in any case, the rabbit-scent is clearly present, and directly connected to the rabbit, in a way we need not call abstract.

[19] *Supra*, p. 26.

The *momentary* nature of coping also aligns with the 'amovable' forms of behaviour that Merleau-Ponty claims we share with (at least) the 'higher' non-human animals.[20] Such behaviour corresponds broadly to smooth coping, although the animals significantly lack the ability to step back and reflect and therefore, for Merleau-Ponty, to form a conception of a thing as a context-free object. For a chimp who can use a box alternately as a seat or as a tool to obtain out-of-reach food,

> the box-as-seat and the box-as-instrument are two distinct and alternative objects... and not two aspects of an identical thing. In other words, the animal cannot at each moment adopt a point of view with regard to objects which is chosen at its discretion; rather the object appears clothed with a 'vector,' invested with a 'functional value' which depends on the effective composition of the field.[21]

Insofar as a we can speak of a '*this*' for the dog, therefore, it is the '*this*' that it is perceiving in its *moment*– *this* 'stranger' approaching, *this* master 'appearing.' From the dog's viewpoint, we ought not to say that she was 'incorrectly' barking at her master, because she wasn't barking *at* her master– she was barking at the 'stranger.' Notice that we are not quite saying either that there are two '*this*'es– a master-*this* and a stranger-*this*– nor that the stranger-*this* 'turns into' the master-*this*. Rather, each '*this*' *is* only in the *moment* of its perception. This is quite a subtle point, and it should be stressed that it is a claim about experience rather than truth. What any person or thing 'is' or means to the dog is bound up with the action that it solicits.[22] In a parallel way, our experience of a baseball (what the ball 'is' to us) differs from the *moment* of hitting to the *moment* of running. *Moments* are transitory because they are context-bound, and are concerned with the involved action rather than the objects of that action, and how they might objectively be. It is not so much the 'ball' we see as the target we aim for, or the fielder we try to escape. Thus, while a philosopher might retort that the dog is most certainly and self-evidently barking incorrectly *at* the master she has misidentified, this would be to misunderstand the point by taking an objective stance toward truth that is unavailable to the dog. The dog's action is solicited by the perceived presence of an intruder. For the dog, there is no objective truth to the *moment* beyond the immediate perception, which, as during coping, is precisely the point.

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[20] Merleau-Ponty 1963, pp. 113-4.
[21] *Ibid*, p. 116.
[22] Cf. Millikan (2005, p. 175) on what she calls 'Pushmi-Pullyu Representations' (PPRs), although the story I am telling does not invoke the presence of representations.

Let us return to McDowell's frisbee-dog. We concluded that he must have some form of '*this*,' what Taylor calls a “pre-understanding” or 'basic, minimal concept,' that at least lets him track and remain concerned with the frisbee throughout the task.[23] And yet, we now see, that '*this*' seems to be tied intricately within the *moment* of the task. The dog simply reacts to what is before it, in its present *moment*. This is not to say that a dog has no sense of history, that it confronts the world anew in each *moment*. The dog is principally guided by habits that may have been taught during training, or acquired through experience. It may, for example, be afraid of someone who has mistreated it in the past, or it may even go on to associate all manner of events with its past abuse, developing defensive habits in reaction to subtle cues like raised hands or male voices. Yet all the same, it requires the presence of some cue for it to re-enter the *moment* of its fear and to evoke the subsequent reaction.

Now, McDowell claims that Sally, smooth-coping in the flow, experiences a minimal '*this*,' apart from any more extended concept of a 'frisbee.' The question, then, becomes, whether her '*this*' is akin to the *momentary* animal '*this*' when she plucks the frisbee from the air. Or is even her most basic 'catching *this*' conceptual in a way that the dog simply cannot share? To rephrase the debate, McDowell's claim is that (mature) humans have one pervasive, conceptual '*this*' that is completely other to the non-conceptual, *momentary* '*this*' of the dog. Dreyfus, on the other hand, claims that humans experience both.

3.3 – *The 'as'-structure*

in which I explicate Heidegger's account of the 'as-structure' of interpretation, drawing parallels between its two 'as'es and the two 'this'es discussed previously.

The concept of two, distinct '*this*'es may not appear initially obvious nor even intelligible. But we can find a description of comparable phenomena in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. In this section, I will unpack Heidegger's 'theory of equipment,' to show how we can relate his descriptions of *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* to non-conceptual and conceptual experience respectively. This will help to illuminate the debate by providing rich phenomenological support for the notion that our everyday experience is other to the rational '*this*' that McDowell claims is pervasive, thus clarifying what Dreyfus means by a mode of experience that we share with infants and

[23] Taylor 2002, p. 111. Cf. Taylor 2005, p. 34.

animals.[24] As noted above, while I aim at providing a coherent reading of Heidegger on this topic, my use his thought here is concerned not so much with exegesis as with finding a useful application of his concepts to the questions at issue in this debate.[25] Heidegger's 'Analytic of Dasein' (Division I of *Being and Time*, where these concepts are introduced) forms just part of a vaster project of 'fundamental ontology.' However, for the purposes of this Chapter I wish to focus on his phenomenological insights into our experience of other entities. Consequently, although they are naturally interrelated, an acceptance of these insights need not entail acceptance or rejection of Heidegger's broader conclusions on Dasein's being.

According to Heidegger, the ready-to-hand entities we encounter in our ordinary dealings (*Umgänge*) are revealed by our actions 'as' being of a certain relevance, whose meaning (or being) is 'articulated' by the action itself within the context in which it's undertaken.[26] At this pre-conceptual stage, the entity is not experienced as a standalone 'thing' with any independence from the situation. The emphasis on the action highlights the distance of this kind of articulation from anything explicitly thought. A table, for example, could be picked out 'pre-conceptually *as*' a table by resting one's coffee cup on it. Heidegger calls this involved perception or 'articulation' *interpretation* (Auslegung), which centres around what he terms the 'as-structure.'[27]

> In dealing with what is environmentally ready-to-hand by interpreting it circumspectively, we 'see' it *as* a table, a door [etc.]; but what we have thus interpreted need not necessarily be also taken apart by making an assertion which definitely characterises it.[28]

The '*as*' here refers to the experience of an entity as a unity and in terms of its being relevant to us in our current action. Heidegger's scare quotes around 'see' emphasise the circumspective nature of this experience– we are not looking at and naming an objective 'door,' but rather understand pre-reflectively the possible actions it offers. That is, we see what is before us *as* a potentiality which holds within it (or better, holds through our relationship towards it) a meaning, as being or being-for something.

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[24] Dreyfus 2005, p. 57.
[25] *Supra*, p. 3.
[26] Heidegger 1962, pp. 189-90.
[27] *Ibid*, p. 200. It should be noted that *interpretation* here is a technical term for Heidegger, referring to our immediate 'picking-out' of entities, and does not imply an explicitly cognitive or linguistic activity.
[28] *Ibid*.

In this first, *zuhanden* sense of interpretation, we pick the entities out as elements of a wider context, and *only* in the context of the particular action that articulates them. That is, the table 'affords' (to use Gibson's term[29]) resting the coffee cup– that is, it is articulated *as* a table in the ready-to-hand sense– because of its place in the living room, amongst the other furniture, in the context of the friend's house we are visiting.[30] Heidegger calls this mode of interpretation "hermeneutic," where the interpreted entity is picked out *in* and *by* the action, without attached predicates or properties or anything that could remove it from its web of attachments in the ongoing task.[31]

This is what Heidegger calls our most primordial way of encountering other entities. Our being-in-the-world means that we always find ourselves in a world in which, as Taylor says, we "know our way about."[32] Heidegger is therefore attacking the notion that we first experience an objective world of things that we only subsequently invest with meaning. That kind of objective perception of things without interpretation or significance– 'just staring'– is, far from being the foundation of seeing, in fact derived from it:

> When we have to do with anything, the mere seeing of the Things which are closest to us bears in itself the structure of interpretation, and in so primordial a manner that just to grasp something *free... of the 'as'* requires a certain readjustment.[33]

Of course, we do experience entities as *things* beyond the hermeneutic interpretation of our ready-to-hand action. Heidegger famously describes the process where our dealings break down, and we experience malfunctioning or missing equipment as 'unready-to-hand.'[34] We can then step back from the entity to perceive it as simply *vorhanden* or present-at-hand– that is, as a self-contained, context-free object.[35] The predication of the entity-as-object begins with *apophansis*, which Heidegger

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[29] Gibson 1979, pp. 127-9.

[30] The same table, stumbled over in a field, while of course being *objectively* the same table, could not be pre-conceptually revealed as such. Conversely, a sheet of plyboard on cinder blocks might, in the context of an undergraduate living room, be revealed in the same way as *being* a coffee table.

[31] Heidegger 1962, p. 201.

[32] Taylor 2002, p. 111.

[33] Heidegger 1962, p. 190.

[34] *Ibid*, p. 104. Dreyfus (1991, pp. 196-8) draws on this account of breakdown in his argument for the translation of reflective, conceptual thought out of smooth coping.

[35] As Wheeler (2005, p. 141) notes, we rarely experience anything as purely ready-to- or present-at-hand, and the two modes of experience are better understood as limits on a spectrum that is for the most part experienced as *unzuhanden* (cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 103).

translates as “letting an entity be seen from itself.”[36] In a movement analogous to the unready-to-hand breakdown in a dealing (*Umgang*), an *assertion* (Aussage) is made which characterises the ready-to-hand entity.[37] Heidegger emphasises that natural language need not be involved at this stage. An assertion can be made in the form of an action, such as when an unready-to-hand hammer is put down for being 'too heavy,' implicitly asserting its “definite character”– its heaviness.[38]

Importantly, however, what is 'put-forward' in the assertion is not the character-giving predicate (“is heavy”), but the *entity itself* (the 'hammer').[39] The *as* is now an *apophantic-as*, revealing the hammer not as an involved ready-to-hand piece of equipment, but *as* a *hammer*, as a definite object with properties. The affordance or relevancy fades to the background, and the object is experienced *as* some*thing* that need not be *for* anything– that is, as context-free. However, in giving the entity this “definite character,” we don't *discover* it, as though it appears from nowhere.[40] Rather, we highlight the previously articulated entity, simultaneously 'dimming down' other entities around it, and “*restrict*” it into its newly-defined characterisation.[41] We now see the entity from a particular angle; the content of the experience has been 'narrowed' to that of an independent Thing.

By making an *assertion*– in this technical sense– an important transition is made in our conscious experience of the entity.[42] The assertion “aims” at something present-at-hand within the ready-to-hand, and what emerges is a disconnected *Thing* with definite properties.

> Within this discovering of presence-at-hand, which is at the same time a covering-up of readiness-to-hand, something present-at-hand which we encounter is given a definite character in its Being-present-at-hand-in-such-and-such-a-manner... only now are we given any access to *properties* or the like.[43]

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[36] Heidegger 1962, p. 196.
[37] *Ibid*.
[38] *Ibid*.
[39] *Ibid*.
[40] *Ibid*, p. 197.
[41] *Ibid*.
[42] As mentioned in Chapter One (p. 30, n. 52), 'conscious' is a particularly problematic word that Heidegger makes a point of avoiding. However, although I lack the space to argue it here, I believe it to be useful and appropriate in this context as I hold it is precisely the type of awareness that begins with *assertion* that is at issue in analytic discussions of consciousness.
[43] Heidegger 1962, p. 200. Concealed beneath the Latin in 'properties' is an emphasis on 'own,' something that is more obvious and of which Heidegger was very conscious in employing the German '*Eigenschaften*.' The owning of properties implies that the entity is something complete in itself, no longer part of an interdependent web.

> When an assertion has given a definite character to something present-at-hand, it says something about it *as* a 'what'; and this 'what' is drawn *from that* which is present-at-hand as such.[44]

In becoming this "what," the *as*-structure transits from the hermeneutic to the apophantic 'as.' Heidegger here argues that the act of asserting changes our very experience of the entity we're dealing with, from that of a context-embedded piece of equipment to a standalone *thing*. The "speciality" of asserting, he says, is that it modifies the as-structure of interpretation.[45] It

> no longer reaches out into a totality of involvements... [but] dwindles to the structure of just letting one see what is present-at-hand, and letting one see it in a definite way.[46]

The two as-structures, I submit, correspond to the two '*this*'es we saw earlier. And thus what we find in Heidegger's discussion of the 'as-structure' is a detailed phenomenological description of those very different experiences of '*this*'ness. Taking them at face-value, they add weight to the case against McDowell. We saw McDowell claim that his frisbee-catching friend differed from the dog because even her most 'basic' *this* could "immediately" form the object of a judgement. And yet, we can now see, McDowell only seems to be describing what Heidegger called the apophantic-as. If McDowell considers the hermeneutic-as, as we ought to read Sally's "practical concept" of "catching *this*," he has failed to distinguish it from the later apophantic assertion.[47] For Heidegger's hermeneutic-as describes a more basic '*this*' than the one McDowell intends, one whose being is only *momentary* and contextual– that is to say, something like the dog's basic '*this*' that we saw earlier. It is only after the apophantic assertion that we can speak of judgements, and hence the '*this*' McDowell describes is not immediate at all. Reflecting back on the debate, it becomes apparent that the

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[44] *Ibid*.
[45] *Ibid*, p. 201.
[46] *Ibid*, p. 200-1.
[47] It is not clear that Dreyfus fully appreciates the distinction between the two 'as'-structures. In some places (e.g., Dreyfus 2007b, p. 371) he claims rather that smooth coping with ready-to-hand equipment doesn't involve an 'as'-structure at all. However, his assumption that the 'as'-structure reveals "objects with general properties like weight, [and] situation-specific aspects like too heavy" shows that he identifies the 'as'-structure with only the *apophantic*-'as.' In a footnote (*ibid*, p. 377, n. 1), however, he both acknowledges the hermeneutic as-structure and its parallels with animal coping, as well as the orthodox Heideggerian reason for denying Dasein's 'as' to animals (Dasein's 'as'-structure contains an understanding of being). Dreyfus avoids the resulting complications of this view by saying he is interested in the *phenomenological*, not *ontological*, consequences of Heidegger's claim. While I could make the same caveat, I hope as I progress to both suggest important distinctions between human and animal hermeneutic experience, as well as more firmly linking Dasein's understanding of being to *apophansis*.

rationality McDowell claims is pervasive is at best only latent during smooth coping, which we can now understand with Dreyfus as a non-conceptual dealing that we could in principle share with non-linguistic animals.

3.4 – *Experience and the 'world'*

in which I explore objections to my claim that animals experience the ready-to-hand hermeneutically-'as'.

I have so far argued that the form of rationality that McDowell claims is pervasive in all human activity is the capacity to take something as an apophantic '*this*.' However, I have argued that this '*this*' pertains only to what Heidegger calls the asserted, present-at-hand object, and that Heidegger demonstrates another, primordial '*this*' that McDowell neglects. In doing so, I have suggested that the ready-to-hand, hermeneutic-'*this*' is something that we share with non-human animals. This suggestion, however, will be fiercely contested by many commentators, who hold that the experience of the *zuhanden* I described above belongs uniquely to Dasein. There are two main arguments to this effect. Firstly, commentators such as Haugeland hold that experience of the ready-to-hand is exclusively human on account of being tied to culture, that ready-to-hand equipment is dependent on the normative structure given to it by a society to make it what it is. I reply in the following section that such arguments overplay the role of human culture and that what is really crucial is the way equipment is *used* towards an end, such that animal experience is sufficiently similar to justify a continuum with humans along the lines of the ready-to-hand. Secondly, thinkers such as Ratcliffe emphasise that the ready-to-hand is only available to creatures with a 'world' in Heidegger's technical sense.[48] In the final section, however, I will argue that Heidegger's own description of animals as 'world-poor' provides us with a starting point to connect animal and human experience.

3.4.1 – *Culture*

in which I answer the first objection– that equipment gets its being principally from social norms– by arguing that what matters most is the context of its use.

I turn first to the objection that experience of the ready-to-hand requires a language-borne culture. This objection does not deny, of course, that animals have encounters with other entities, which hold particular, context-sensitive significances for them.

[48] I use 'world' in quotation marks to indicate that I am using the term in Heidegger's sense, in contrast to Heidegger, who uses quotation marks only when *not* using the word in his technical sense.

However, it distances animal experience from Dasein's dealings with the ready-to-hand because in the latter case, the significance is drawn from the social norms laid down by the human cultural context. While culture certainly plays a role for us, I will argue in this section that emphasising it overlooks the crucial significance that equipment gets from its *use*, and thus overlooks the broad similarities between our ready-to-hand dealings and animal activity.

Many commentators have already pointed out the parallels between Heidegger's description of Dasein's dealings and animal coping. Winkler argues that the hermeneutic-as is exactly what we share with other animals.[49] That is to say, while animals are unable to form judgements of truth or falsity, they nonetheless interpret (in Heidegger's technical sense) the relevancy of things they encounter. Indeed, says Winkler, they must, if they are "to orient themselves in their environment,... to survive."[50] As I argued in the previous section, this orienting can be described as we do a human's hermeneutic-'*this*,' and it is a simple logical step to identify them, if we strip back human action to consider only our ready-to-hand dealings, prior to the apophantic assertion. Furthermore, as Wheeler points out, this mode of interpretation highlights our pre-theoretical, embodied way of coping. Understanding it, then, also means understanding our own animality.[51]

Thus there is a strong case that hermeneutic interpretation and ready-to-hand coping describe not only Dasein's use of equipment, but offer a way of connecting human and animal experiences of being. Yet other commentators insist that it is a mistake to identify an animal's behaviour with Dasein's *zuhanden* actions, pointing to the "abyss" that Heidegger firmly carves between Dasein and non-human animals.[52] For despite the obvious similarities, Heidegger maintains that Dasein enacts its *zuhanden* dealings within a 'world' (*Welt*), and this 'world' is more than the totality of available entities, but encompasses the vast web of relationships between equipment, and hence requires a cultural basis, as that which designates the norms of equipment use.[53] Animals, on the contrary, have only an 'environment' (*Umwelt*), a limited sphere of involvements with fewer possibilities of action, and Heidegger is never explicit about the being of the entities that show up for them.[54]

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[49] Winkler 2007, p. 527.
[50] *Ibid*.
[51] Wheeler 1995, p. 69.
[52] Heidegger 1995, p. 264; cf. Heidegger, 1993, p. 230.
[53] Heidegger 1962, p. 93.
[54] Heidegger 1995, p. 239; cf. pp. 192-8.

After this first glance, it might appear that McDowell, with his emphasis on a total division between human and animal experience, is closer to Heidegger than Dreyfus is or than I am, with my equation of the pre-conceptual '*this*' with the hermeneutic. And this is hardly coincidental, as it is from Heidegger's student Gadamer that McDowell takes the distinction between *Welt* and *Umwelt* to argue that the human's ready-to-hand coping must be of a different order to the animal's.[55] Yet I will show below that while we ought to accept the distinction, we should nonetheless hold that the entities revealed by animals' behaviour in their environments are of the same, ready-to-hand kind as the equipment in Dasein's 'world.'

Gadamer's Heideggerian distinction must have had an obvious appeal to McDowell, who was developing his idea of a human 'second nature' to account for phenomena, such as mindedness, which can only problematically be explained by the reductive, natural sciences.[56] And through this distinction, we can draw another link between McDowell and some interpretations of Heidegger. For McDowell, second-nature is acquired via the process of *Bildung*, a person's development within and through a culture. Only with the development of a second-nature does the human animal acquire a 'world.'[57]

With this emphasis on the role of culture, McDowell finds himself in broad agreement with Haugeland's influential (although admittedly "free-wheeling") reading of *Being and Time*.[58] Haugeland argues that it is only through its existence in a culturally-mediated 'world' that Dasein is able to encounter equipment as ready-to-hand. Equipment's being, he argues, comes not simply from its being for or 'in order to' do something, but from its publicly-designated or "proper" use, its "what it's for."[59] Where an ape might use a stick to get a banana, Haugeland maintains that it is not using equipment in a ready-to-hand sense because, no matter whether it works or not, one cannot say the ape uses the stick properly or improperly.[60]

Dasein, by contrast, can use a screwdriver properly to drive in a screw, or improperly to carve graffiti into a wall, and the propriety of the act is independent of the individual

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[55] McDowell 2007*a*, pp. 344-6, cf. McDowell, 1994, p. 115.
[56] McDowell 1994, pp. 76-84.
[57] *Ibid*, pp. 124-6. The similarity is even more pronounced when we note that Heidegger's *Welt* is also *gebildet* (although the choice of words here appears coincidental).
[58] Haugeland 1982, p. 15, although Haugeland was later to moderate this view and retract his attribution of it to Heidegger (see Haugeland 1998*a*, p. 4).
[59] Haugeland 1982, pp. 17-8.
[60] *Ibid*, p. 18.

Dasein or whether it succeeds or not.[61] The proper use interprets the screwdriver hermeneutically-*as* a screwdriver because it also highlights the 'equipmental network,' referring (*verweisung*[62]) to the wider context of screws, timber, furniture, and so on, and this equipmental totality belongs to the vaster cultural pattern of which each Dasein is only a particular manifestation or "case."[63] None of this, Haugeland claims, is manifest in the chimp's use of a tool.

Yet here Haugeland ties the phenomenon of *verweisen* or 'referral' too closely to culture. For Heidegger the key function of referral is the placement of ready-to-hand equipment into a network of involvements (*Bewandtnisse*) that are aimed toward a task, ultimately for the sake of the being of Dasein.[64] Thus the improper use of the screwdriver refers to a network no less than the proper use does, this time of wall, letters, and a particular possibility of Dasein (artist, protester, or what have you). It should be noted that Heidegger does not discuss 'appropriateness' (*Geeignetheit*) in terms of culture, but as a characteristic of the ready-to-hand that is to be contrasted with the properties (*Eigenschaften*) of the present-at-hand. That is, where present-at-hand *Things* have properties by which one can 'tell' what they are, ready-to-hand equipment is similarly 'told' by whether it can be 'appropriated' (*zugeeignet*) to the task or not.[65] The 'improper' use of the screwdriver-as-graffiti-tool is therefore not 'inappropriate' in the sense Heidegger intends, as it can just as easily be 'appropriated' to the task of carving as to that of screwing. A better example of inappropriateness for a screwdriver would be polishing a window. In the context of this task, if the screwdriver were to show up as equipment at all, it could only be as inappropriate.

This indicates that equipment takes its *zuhanden* being not from its design or designation, but its *use*. As Wheeler points out, Dasein frequently uses natural entities like stones in a ready-to-hand way to accomplish some task.[66] The referral is a feature of the act itself, and is tied to the in-order-to. In later work, Haugeland moderates his thesis and admits that the roles that make equipment what it is can be temporary and

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[61] *Ibid*.

[62] Macquarrie and Robinson translate *verweisen* as 'reference or assignment,' noting the difficulty in capturing the precise meaning of the German in a single English word (see Heidegger 1962, p. 97, n. 2). I follow Haugeland in translating it simply as 'referral,' which feels equally satisfactory, so long as one keeps Heidegger's intention in mind.

[63] Haugeland 1982, p. 20.

[64] Heidegger 1962, pp. 115-6.

[65] *Ibid*, p. 98. I use 'tell' here in Haugeland's (1998d, p. 313) sense of identifying, discriminating, 'telling apart,' 'telling the difference,' and so on, which I agree is a useful translation of what Heidegger means by *Rede* (cf. Dreyfus 1991, pp. *xi*, 214).

[66] Wheeler 1995, p. 66, n. 3.

ad hoc, but still connects this with a cultural 'standard' or 'proper' role.[67] Yet even this remains too strong, as it focuses more on the present-at-hand *thing* than on the task which gives being to the equipment.

For example, to properly tune a djembe drum, one needs to use a stick in the final stages to tighten the string. There is no designated 'right' stick for this job (you cannot buy a 'djembe tuner'[68]); a suitably strong stick must literally be appropriated to the task. Using the stick, a ready-to-hand network of the drum skin, string, and so on is lit up as you work away. If you then use the stick for another task– to beat a different drum, or to shoo the dog away from the picnic basket– a whole different equipmental network is lit up. As we saw earlier on, what an item of equipment actually *is* readily-to-hand is only, like its network, for the *moment* of the task.

Haugeland's error comes from thinking of the tool as a present-at-hand *Thing* with pre-defined properties. Yet the screwdriver-Thing is only revealed *as* such when it is taken apophantically. This *vorhandensein* is certainly cultural, although there is a degree of arbitrariness even to that. If enough people used screwdrivers to carve graffiti, there is no reason it couldn't be culturally-designated as *for* that and renamed the 'Graffitor.' But before that, its *Zuhandenheit* is only for the *moment* of the task, be that driving a screw, carving a wall, or anything else it is 'handy' for. If culture were such a defining factor, there would not only be a problem with the use of natural, unmade tools, but also with new inventions. But invented tools do not need to wait until a culture has accepted them and generated a proper network for their involvements before they can be encountered as equipment. They are equipment, complete with network, the first time they are used.

The cultural element of equipment that Haugeland seeks is to be found insofar as Dasein is always *Mitsein*, 'being-with.' Any tool therefore holds the potential to be used, more or less successfully, toward a goal available for Dasein in a broad sense. The patterns of Dasein are vastly overlapping; while the screwdriver more obviously reveals a world of others via its ergonomic design, the network of tuning-stick just as readily articulates a shared 'in-order-to' of drumming, while that of the stick-as-dog-

[67] Haugeland 2013, pp. 105-6.

[68] Since writing this, I have discovered that one can indeed buy a small lever (or 'cleat') that is handy for tuning djembes. Such tools are obviously not traditional, and at any rate, while some drum shops sell specially-marketed djembe cleats, cleats were originally designed for other rope-pulling activities, such as windsurfing, thereby demonstrating once again that it is the appropriation to the *task* that is important, not the object itself.

shoo-er reveals a vast world of picnics that is most certainly shared, and which belongs to a wider for-the-sake-of a possibility of being.

3.4.2 – *Having 'world'*

in which I answer the second objection– that readiness-to-hand can only be experienced with Dasein's 'world'– by arguing that the animal's 'poor world' must contain a kind of 'poor ready-to-hand'.

I have argued that the way equipment is used is more important to its being than any cultural significations, thus clearing the way to describe animal experience as of a kind with our dealings with the ready-to-hand. However, some thinkers would object to this, holding instead that having 'world' implies a relation to entities that is closed off from other animals. In this section, I will explore Heidegger's own discussion of animals and 'world' to argue that, although he maintained an 'abyss' between Dasein and animals, that difference has less to do with the experience of using ready-to-hand entities while coping than it does with the apophantic-as we saw above.

Ratcliffe, for example, argues that the crucial feature of 'world'-possession is the capacity to "understand possibilities as possibilities."[69] *Zuhanden* dealings within-a-'world' cannot, therefore, be likened to animal behaviour which is merely "driven... by environmental stimuli," because it is experienced instead within a range of possibilities that Dasein chooses, or chooses not, to pursue.[70] In Ratcliffe's reading, the apophantic distance is already within sight in the ready-to-hand and, as a prerequisite for 'world,' forms the basis for *vorhanden* experience as well. As such, it mirrors McDowell's side of the debate, as it implies that there is no translation of content between hermeneutic and apophantic experience. 'World,' on this account, is therefore not seen as co-arising with Dasein's capacity to experience entities apophantically-*as*, but as a necessary condition for it (although to call it a 'necessary condition' is perhaps misleading; Heidegger would emphasise that Dasein is not in a world within which it *then* comes to experience the apophantic– they are equiprimordial, with 'world' providing the background against which the apophantic is known). As this possibility of distance, 'world' is thereby argued also to precede and inform our *zuhanden* dealings, thus making them of another order to the animal's environmental coping which, as we have seen, remains captivated within its *moment*. The idea is that 'world' has a temporal extension, and therefore our ready-to-hand

[69] Ratcliffe 2012, p. 148.
[70] *Ibid*.

dealings are always undertaken in the context of having future consequences that we will also have to deal with.

Ratcliffe, like McDowell and Haugeland, is right to maintain that there is an important distinction between *Welt* and *Umwelt* that shapes how Dasein comes to be with other entities, and the significance those entities hold for it. Yet that distinction, which Heidegger fully articulates in his *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures of 1929-30,[71] while important, is not conclusive to our core question. We are asking about Dasein's experience *while* it is coping readily-to-hand, and whether that experience is of a kind with an animal's coping. Whether this coping takes place in a 'world' or in an 'environment' is secondary here, because the experience at issue takes place before the *assertion* of the apophantic that allows the experience of anything– including possibilities– *as* that which they are. On Ratcliffe's account, 'assertion' is read merely as the literal making explicit (*aus-sagung*) of what is already present in the ready-to-hand. Yet this is to understand the ready-to-hand as something which is essentially present-at-hand being used in a particular way, rather than as a different *mode* of being, one which takes its being precisely from the context in which equipment is used, and which is ontologically prior to the present-at-hand.

The asserted *vorhanden* entities, experienced apophantically-*as* entities– like the awareness of possibilities apophantically-*as* possibilities– do not impinge on the *momentary*, qualitative *experience* of the *zuhanden* hermeneutically-*as* the *zuhanden*. As Okrent argues, an animal's activities are as future-directed as ours without being experienced *as* possibilities.[72] Our hammering may well be for-the-sake of our future, sheltered Dasein, but the conscious, subject-object awareness[73] of that possibility does not enter into the *moment* of coping any more than newly-hatched chicks enter a bird's nest-building. Heidegger's analytic aimed to isolate the constituent capacities of Dasein, and while he maintained that those *existentialia* were to be found equiprimordially in Dasein, I will argue below that we can hold that dealings like ours with ready-to-hand entities, at least, can be attributed to beings which lack experience of the present-at-hand without losing the force of Heidegger's phenomenology.

That our *momentary* actions with the *zuhanden* have a parallel with other animals' is

[71] Heidegger 1995, p. 239.
[72] Okrent 2007, p. 104.
[73] On issues with the term 'conscious awareness,' see p. 99, n. 41, and p. 30, n. 52.

shown by our absorption in them. In the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures, Heidegger describes an animal as 'captivated,' *benommen*, by the entities in its environment. Thus, an animal can only 'behave' (*benehmen*) towards other entities, unlike Dasein, who is able to take them *as* entities– that is, apophantically.[74] Yet in *Being and Time*, of which those lectures are but an elaboration,[75] Heidegger similarly notes Dasein's *Benommenheit* (translated by Macquarrie and Robinson as 'fascination') with the ready-to-hand of its concern, and contrasts this with looking *at* something as present-at-hand.[76] Never one to be casual in his choice of words, Heidegger's use of *benehmen* when he later comes to discuss animal experience is significant, and points back to the clear parallel of hermeneutic-interpretation across both humans and other animals. It indicates that *within* the context of ready-to-hand coping– within the *moment* of the task– Dasein is just as 'captivated' as the animal. What differentiates Dasein from animals is not to be found *within* the coping, but rather through the additional capacity of apophantic *assertion* of the entity via its *unzuhanden* breakdown. Ratcliffe has made the same mistake as McDowell in not seeing that as soon as attention is drawn to the experience of possibilities *as* possibilities, an apophantic breakdown has already been made, and the ready-to-hand left behind.[77]

Of course, for Heidegger, the animal's inability to experience possibilities *as* possibilities is a crucial factor in the 'abyss' that separates them from us. His distinction between Dasein's *Welt* and the animal's *Umwelt* in the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* does not involve much discussion of ready-to-hand coping but rather focuses on Dasein's ability to take an entity *as* an entity– that is, apophantically. But it is important to note in this connection that although Heidegger discusses the animal's *Umwelt* (whence it is taken up by Gadamer and finds its way ultimately to McDowell), it is not his preferred term. He speaks rather of the animal as *weltarm*, 'poor-in-world.'[78] This poverty is not to be understood as an

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[74] Heidegger 1995, p. 259.

[75] Although the *FCM* lectures come two years after *Being and Time*'s publication, and Heidegger addresses some topics, such as life and animality, that receive no attention in his masterwork, the core themes of the lecture course– 'world,' finitude, and the *logos*, particularly the *logos apophantikos*– elaborate on and are consistent with how those topics are treated in *Being and Time* and contemporaneous works such as the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* lectures (1927/1988– which discuss the material of the unwritten Division 3 of *Being and Time*) and *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929/1990). I therefore hold that Heidegger's thoughts on animality in *FCM* are a natural extension of his thinking in *Being and Time*, and should be treated as such.

[76] Heidegger 1962, p. 88. Cf. p. 220, where 'inauthenticity' is described as a state of being 'fascinated' by the world, and hence a closing-off of the owning of one's own possibilities.

[77] Cf. Carman's 'scholastic fallacy' and O'Regan's 'refrigerator light illusion,' *supra*, p. 44.

[78] Heidegger 1995, pp. 176, 185.

incompleteness, but rather a “lack” or “deprivation” with respect to Dasein.[79] I will argue below that what is lacking is precisely the apophantic-*as*, and that we can therefore conceive the hermeneutic-'*this*' apart from it.

While Heidegger does not address animal experience explicitly in terms of *interpretation*, a careful reading reveals how we can do so while remaining consistent with what he *does* have to say about the commonalities and differences between animals and humans. In his discussion of the animal's poverty-in-world, McNeill draws upon Heidegger's cryptic statement that non-human animals 'both have and don't have world.'[80] McNeill suggests that the claim that the animal *has* world means that it has “some kind of openness for encountering other beings in general,” while saying that it *does not have* world means it “does not have access to other beings *in the way that humans do*.”[81]

'The way that humans do' may appear inconclusive, since as we have seen, Heidegger's very point in *Being and Time* is that humans experience entities *both* hermeneutically and apophantically, as ready-to-hand and as present-at-hand. Haugeland's and Ratcliffe's views above are rooted in the observation that Heidegger thinks in terms of mutually-dependent pairs of opposites. They would argue that *Zuhandenheit* only makes sense in opposition to *Vorhandenheit*, just as *Eigentlichkeit* ('authenticity') only makes sense with reference to *Uneigentlichkeit*. Furthermore, it could be argued (in a McDowellian vein) that 'world,' as something 'formed' through initiation into a culture, is always something public, and our hermeneutic experience thus crucially differs from any version we might attribute to an animal.[82]

Yet the concept of 'world-poverty' signifies just that the animal is deprived of the possibilities that are opened to Dasein through its *gebildet* 'world.' There is no interplay between immersed dealings and detached thought for the animal, but there remains nonetheless *some* relation to entities, unlike the 'worldless' (*weltlos*) stone.[83] This relation, I have argued, finds a strong parallel in our own captivated, *momentary* experience. And this conclusion is strengthened as McNeill continues, for it becomes apparent that the exclusively *human* access that is at stake is really the apophantic.

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[79] *Ibid*, p. 195. Cf. Kuperus 2007, p. 15.
[80] Heidegger 1995, pp. 209-10.
[81] McNeill 1999, p. 216, McNeill’s emphasis.
[82] I will indeed argue in the next Chapter that there is a difference between human and animal coping, although I will maintain that the mode of awareness captured by the hermeneutic-as is shared across this difference.
[83] Heidegger 1995, pp. 196-8.

> To say that the animal is unable to apprehend beings as beings (*Seiendes*) is to say that it is unable to apprehend them in their being (*Sein*), that is, in respect of the fact that they 'are': that they are this or that; that they are present here and now and not absent; and so on.[84]

He goes on to quote Heidegger, who states that the animal's "driven behaviour," just like Dasein's *zuhanden* action, "does *not* relate itself... *to what is present-at-hand as such*."[85]

It is important here to note that when Heidegger says that the animal has no 'as,' he means the apophantic *as something*.[86] While Heidegger denies his lizard a present-at-hand relationship to a rock *as a rock* or to the sun *as the sun*, he maintains that it does have "its own relation to the rock, to the sun, and to a host of other things."[87] Despite the animal's lack of apophantic interpretation, McNeill therefore argues, it still "in fact has and must have a certain ability to relate to something *as* something, although not, indeed, *as being* something."[88]

> A cat responds to the presence of a mouse *as* its potential dinner, or *as* something to play with; it responds to the presence of a dog *as* a potential threat– *and not* as its food (but this 'and not'... is presumably not open to the animal *as such*).[89]

The closed-off 'and not' clearly refers to apophansis, for as McNeill observes:

> to have access to any particular entity as being this entity is *already* to see it *in an originary relation to* other beings, as being *this* entity *and not another*[90]

before elaborating that:

> Apophantic discourse is discourse which makes the specific claim solely to point out and manifest that which already is in its presence at hand.[91]

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[84] McNeill 1999, p. 221.
[85] Heidegger 1995, p. 248 in McNeill 1999, p. 221, Heidegger's emphasis.
[86] A superficial reading of, for example, Heidegger 1995, p. 274, might lead one to believe that Heidegger denies the animal the 'as' rather than the 'something *as* something,' where only the latter implies the apophantic.
[87] Heidegger 1995, p. 198.
[88] McNeill 1999, p. 239.
[89] *Ibid*.
[90] *Ibid*, p. 234.
[91] *Ibid*.

The important difference between humans and animals, therefore, is not that animals don't have access to other entities, a claim that barely needs refuting, but that they don't have access to other entities *as* being entities. That is, they cannot interpret them apophantically-*as* entities which are isolated from the *moment* in which they are encountered. Just as we saw with Haugeland's dog earlier on, the animal's encounter is contained entirely within the *moment* of its action, with no possibility of the encountered entity being any way other than it is.

Conclusions

To return to our opening scene: The arguments I have presented in the course of this Chapter suggest that Sally's frisbee catch, insofar as it is a hermeneutic interpretation, is indeed of a kind with the dog's. But what becomes apparent is a very subtle distinction, tied to the assertive transition that Heidegger describes. Sally seems to take the frisbee she spontaneously caught as something *zuhanden*. As McDowell says, she was not engaged in any reflective thinking or planning prior to the catch she so expertly performed. She ran toward it, as the dog did, with an implicit awareness of her environment, proven as she avoided obstacles and did not stumble, aiming for the point at which her path crossed the frisbee's, and reached toward it as she approached with her hand already taking the shape of the frisbee as she stretched out her arm.[92] With all of this we find parallels in the dog's behaviour, which is likewise focused on and articulates the frisbee as a hermeneutic-*this*– not as a 'frisbee,' as the object of judgements, but as what Merleau-Ponty might call a 'force' which solicits her towards it in a particular way.[93]

When McDowell then asks Sally "why did you just do that?", he is performing the assertive breakdown both for himself and for Sally. The 'catching *this*' that he refers to, and that she considers, is not the soliciting force that captivated her a moment ago as she raced towards it. *It* is now an apophantic-*this*, a 'frisbee.' And where this '*this*' can be used 'immediately for judgements,' it is not the '*this*' that we are concerned with in regard to coping.

To look at it another way, we cannot ask the dog 'why' he chased the frisbee. This does not mean there was no reason (*Grund*) for it; it means the dog does not have Reason

[92] Cf. Kelly 2000, p. 174.
[93] Merleau-Ponty 1963, pp. 168-9.

(*Vernunft*). That is, the dog does not have the apophantic-*this* that Sally does. Therefore, as McDowell observes, Sally can employ rational capacities (*Vernunft*) towards the frisbee, even when she can't articulate a *Grund*. But this *vernünftig*, apophantic-*this*, is not the one at issue in the coping; it arises afterwards.

This Chapter has argued that conceptual capacities do not pervade human beings "all the way out," even into our 'smooth coping,' as McDowell argues in his debate with Dreyfus. It has done so via three interconnected arguments. In the first, I argued that the kind of rational conceptuality that McDowell argues for is the capacity to take something *as* a '*this*.' In the second section, however, I showed how McDowell actually refers only to what Heidegger calls the apophantic-'*this*,' which arises from the more basic hermeneutic-'*this*' that is involved in coping, and which McDowell overlooks. In the final section, I showed how this basic '*this*' is of a kind with that involved in animal dealings and does not, *pace* McDowell and Haugeland, require a culturally-mediated 'world.' Where I have used Heidegger principally as a source for the phenomenology of the two distinct '*this*'es, I have also showed how his broader analytic should be read consistently with my thesis. His influence on McDowell through Gadamer on precisely this subject implies that re-understanding Heidegger in this way also requires re-understanding the foundations of McDowell's own theory. However, we have also seen important parallels between Heidegger and McDowell that suggest Dreyfus' equation of animal and infant behaviour with second-natural coping may be too quick. This sets the scene for our next Chapter, where I will argue that, while Heidegger and McDowell are right to emphasise the role of language in 'world' or second nature, Dreyfus' emphasis on un-mindedness keeps us closer to the phenomena involved.

Chapter Four
Phronesis *and Post-Conceptuality*

In the previous Chapters, I have argued that human experience and cognition can be described in terms of two distinct layers. I have called these layers the 'non-conceptual' and the 'conceptual,' understanding conceptuality as the capacity to experience entities and the world in a context-independent way, apophantically *as* '*this*' entity. Such experiences are available as content only for animals with rationality in the sense of *Vernunft*, which is to say, human beings.[1] However, I have argued that rational animals share with non-rational animals the qualitatively different experience of entities hermeneutically 'as' the non-conceptual content of smooth coping. The key difference has emerged as the ability of rational animals to step back from the *moment* of their coping and to reflect, even if only for the instant it takes to Name something '*this*.'

Yet it may be objected that the equation of human and animal coping seems oversimplified, especially insofar as I have thus far focused only on the translation of content *from* the non-conceptual *to* the conceptual. I have yet to fully discuss an important objection that arose at several points earlier: the observation that, even if we perform our skills with non-conceptual cognition, this presupposes our having learned them as concepts. Our chess master, for example, might directly and reflexively see the right move to make, but they are still– by enacting the verb 'to castle,' or displaying an understanding of how a knight can move– employing knowledge that can only be learned in a reflective, conceptual way. What is seen in the *moment* may be non-conceptual, but it implies entities that get their being from social practices, practices that are conceptually structured. The suggestion that non-conceptual coping is always prior to our conceptual understanding, then, seems to give an incomplete picture of the kind of coping under discussion.

In this Chapter, therefore, I will begin to refine the account I have given so far. Where I have previously isolated two distinct layers, I aim now to explore their entanglement, and to consider what it means to hold that conceptually-derived content can be experienced as the non-conceptual content of unreflective coping capacities. To do this, I will explore accounts of what Aristotle called *phronesis*, or 'practical wisdom.'

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[1] Further arguments as to why we should deny the presence of *Vernunft* in non-human animals will be made in Chapter Five.

Phronesis is discussed by Dreyfus and McDowell, as well as at length by Heidegger, as an exemplar of coping in peculiarly human contexts. Heidegger in particular discusses it with reference to *Umsicht* and *Eigentlichkeit*, suggesting that parallels may be drawn between *phronesis* and the authentic *moments* of esoteric expertise, which we saw in Chapter Two are intertwined with reflective thought. These descriptions, then, should serve as a starting point for articulating a second and peculiarly human form of non-conceptual cognition that diverges from the parallels with animals that I argued for in Chapter Three.

In the first Sections of this Chapter, I will explore conceptions of *phronesis*, as well as its possessor, the *phronimos*, to argue that, as a practical application of ethical action, it demonstrates a fluidity between technical and ethical practice. This opens the door to discuss the relation of *phronesis* to expertise, showing how *phronesis* is an exemplar of a wider form of smooth coping with concepts. In the following Section, I ground the phenomenology of phronetic coping in its special relationship to memory, and in its association with the conscience, to show how it describes conceptual content experienced in an embodied, non-conceptual way. I conclude by taking up Charles Taylor's suggestion that, rather than *non*-conceptual, *phronesis* is *post*-conceptual, and argue that it is an example of coping in a non-conceptual way within our conceptually-built McDowellian second-natures. The content of such coping is experienced as distinct from the apophantic-'as,' but also from whatever version of the hermeneutic-'as' that non-rational animals may share with human beings. This will later inform my arguments in the Chapters of Part Two, which will hold that human experience is characterised by a direct *linguistic* perception.

4.1 – *Why* phronesis*?*

in which I introduce Aristotle's account of* phronesis *and explain why, in spite of its heritage as an ethical concept, it remains highly relevant to our questions of concepts and perception.

Phronesis plays a central role in the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, with both thinkers drawing upon Aristotle's discussion of it to support their side of the argument. In this first section, therefore, I will explore and unpack this *arete* or 'virtue' both to understand the different conceptions of it, and to gain a clearer idea of its relevance to the debate.

Phronesis is generally translated 'prudence' or 'practical wisdom' and is a major theme

of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where it is discussed at length in Book Six. It is listed, together with *noûs*, *sophia*, *episteme* and *techne*, as one of five intellectual virtues (*aretai dianoetikai*), "by which the soul attains the truth."[2] Among these, it is grouped together with *techne*– skill expertise– as being concerned with things which can change, unlike *sophia* and *episteme*, which give access to universals, to that which does not change.[3] Unlike the latter two, *phronesis* and *techne*, as forms of knowledge, are unable to be captured in abstract rules or propositions, as their possession is marked by a direct discernment of what needs to be done that is unique to the specific situation in which it is performed.

There is therefore an important overlap between *phronesis* and *techne*. They share a form of deliberation which is not dialectical reasoning, but is tied directly to perception.[4] They differ principally in the ends to which the knowledge serves and is applied, with *techne* producing an object, while *phronesis* is directed at the actor themselves, and more broadly to their actions in the situation.[5] *Phronesis* is tied to moral virtue, as its enactment leads its possessor to choose the 'good' or 'noble' path of action.[6] Aristotle explicitly distinguishes *phronesis* from *deinoteta* or 'cleverness,' a morally neutral ability to work any situation to one's advantage.[7] While cleverness obviously involves great skill, knowledge, and discernment, it is not *phronesis*, since its possession says little about the character of the actor or the action.

It may be objected, then, that *phronesis* is too narrow a topic to inform our discussion, and that Aristotle's apparent concern with the ethical is tangential to the questions of cognition which we are concerned with here. Yet for Aristotle, the subject matter of *ēthikē* or 'morality' is much broader than the questions of 'right' and 'wrong' that the word has come to signify, something we should notice as we reflect on the word '*ethos*,' which refers to habits and customs that construct our character ('*ēthos*') and which we develop just as much in our practical dealings as in our social lives.[8] *Phronesis* is therefore relevant to our question in many ways. As we will see below, an understanding of *phronesis* formed the starting point of the Dreyfus-McDowell

[2] Aristotle, 1139b15. Unless otherwise stated, references to Aristotle are to the *Nicomachean Ethics* and are given by Bekker number, usually in a range (e.g. 5-10) indicating the paragraph rather than the exact lines. I have principally relied on Bartlett & Collins (2011) for English translations, and Rackham (1926) for Greek text, having also made use of Irwin's (1985) translation.
[3] Aristotle, 1139a5-10.
[4] Aristotle, 1141b25-30.
[5] Aristotle, 1140b5. Cf. Heidegger 1997, p. 35.
[6] Aristotle, 1144a25-30.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] McDowell adopts a similarly broad view as he discusses *phronesis* in *Mind and World* (1994, p. 84).

debate, which began with Dreyfus criticising McDowell's use of *phronesis* as an example of enacted conceptual capacities.[9] Even more importantly, perhaps, is the role that *phronesis* plays in Heidegger's thought. Although the term is not mentioned in *Being and Time*, Kisiel's comprehensive study of the background of that text asserts that "the *phronesis* into human action constitutes the exemplary paradigm of [*Being and Time*'s] Second Division, just as the other nontheoretical 'dianoetic virtue,' *techne*... is the basic example of the First."[10] That is, it is not *phronesis* itself, but the mode of knowing and acting of which it is an example that is of key importance to Heidegger, McDowell, and Dreyfus. As such, an investigation of *phronesis* serves as an entry point to this wider mode of enacted cognition.

The distinction between *techne* and *phronesis*, and its mirror in the Divisions of Heidegger's masterwork, therefore becomes significant to our investigation. Much of Dreyfus' argument, as I have presented and for the most part defended it in Chapters One and Three, has its roots in Division One and the theory of equipment– that is to say, with the application of *techne* as a situation-specific enacted form of knowledge. However, we saw in Chapter Two that the everyday expertise of our ready-to-hand dealings– which in Chapter Three I argued we ought to extend to animals– is for the most part *uneigentlich*– unowned. Division Two of *Being and Time*, however, revisits the themes of the first Division through the lens of *Eigentlichkeit*, and we therefore find something of a parallel between the enactment of *phronesis* and the authentic, esoteric expertise I discussed in Chapter Two.

The line between moral imperative and technical expertise, then, is not so pronounced as it might at first appear. As mentioned above, Aristotle's view of ethical practice went beyond narrow questions to take in the broader way we approach our form of life, and it would not be surprising if Heidegger was thinking about the common thread linking our practical and ethical dealings. For example, in the years before *Being and Time* was published, Heidegger referred to *phronesis* as *Umsicht*, 'circumspection,' the form of sight which in *Being and Time* characterises our practical dealings with the ready-to-hand, thereby blurring the line between *techne* and ways of living.[11] By the same token, as will become clear in what follows, we should

[9] Dreyfus 2005, p. 50.
[10] Kisiel 1993, p. 250.
[11] Heidegger 1997, p. 33. Cf. Heidegger 1992, p. 377 (retranslated and abridged in Kisiel 1993, p. 266) where he calls *phronesis* '*fürsorgende Umsicht*,' thereby restricting it to our dealings with Others, which suggests that *phronesis* is called upon rather as an exemplary case of a broader species of cognition than as representing that mode of cognition entirely.

extend our understanding of *phronesis* beyond purely moral knowledge.

I have argued in this section that Heidegger drew upon *phronesis* as one example of the kind of authentic practical understanding that develops out of the everyday dealings exemplified by *techne*. In the following sections, then, I will investigate *phronesis* as it is taken up in the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, in order to gain a better understanding of the divergence of this form of *eigentlich* coping from the accounts of the everyday we have seen so far.

4.2 – Phronesis, *coping*, *and the Dreyfus-McDowell debate*

in which I explore the role of the* logos *in* phronesis*, and suggest that* phronesis *involves the experience of concepts in a non-conceptual way.

Phronesis appears in the opening volleys of the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, when Dreyfus, in his Presidential Address, criticises McDowell's understanding of it in *Mind and World*.[12] In particular, he objects to what he understands as McDowell's assertion that the *phronimos* responds to reasons that are specifiable in advance, outside of the enacted situation. However, following McDowell's response in his first *Inquiry* article, Dreyfus retracts that criticism, admitting that he misunderstood McDowell's reading.[13] *Phronesis*, for McDowell, is a "situation-specific discernment," suggesting the same absence of generalised rules and concepts that Dreyfus emphasises in his discussion of smooth coping.[14]

This basic agreement on *phronesis* covers up dissensions that will become the basis for the subsequent disagreement between the two philosophers. *Phronesis* is discussed by both Dreyfus and McDowell, as it was by Heidegger, as an exemplar of practical coping. The original question, as discussed in the previous Chapters, is whether practical coping involves conceptual content, in the sense of whether it has been Named– that is, whether it involves content that need undergo no transformation if it is to be expressed as the subject of a proposition. In the terms of Chapter Three, it asks whether *phronesis* involves the apophantic-'*this*.' In Aristotle's terms, this *'this*' is the *logos*, as expressed in the *logos apophantikos*– that is, a *logos* that can be immediately expressed propositionally without a change in content.[15]

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[12] Dreyfus 2005, p. 50.
[13] McDowell 2007a, p. 340; Dreyfus 2007a, p. 353.
[14] McDowell 2007a, p. 340.
[15] Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 16b26-17a8. Heidegger explicitly connects his conception of the asserted apophantic 'something *as* something' with Aristotle's *logos apophantikos*. See Heidegger

Recognising the Aristotelian roots of both Heidegger and McDowell's thought, we find a more explicit expression of the overlap between rationality and conceptuality that has pervaded the debate so far, for the kind of rationality that McDowell invokes descends from what Aristotle discussed as *logos* and *legein*. When McDowell discusses 'the space of reasons,' he means the conceptual realm, with its particular access to truth, that for Aristotle is tied to speech and which also for McDowell arises through our acquisition of linguistic capacities and development of a 'second nature.'[16] The 'rational animal' McDowell so frequently invokes is the *zoon logon echon*– literally, the 'animal (or even more literally, the 'living being') with *logos*'– and hence, as I argued previously, rationality or *Vernunft* must be understood less in terms of an ability to give reasons (*Gründe*) but rather as the ability to relate to the world in terms of the *logos*.[17]

McDowell's use of *phronesis* becomes an issue for Dreyfus, then, because the latter's account of coping draws upon Heidegger's reading of Aristotle, which claims that in *phronesis* "there is accomplished something like a pure perceiving, one that no longer falls within the domain of the *logos*."[18] Dreyfus sees this as support for his central point that thought is not involved in our expert performances, in that the cognitive content of coping is not such that it can be immediately expressed linguistically. However, McDowell disputes this understanding, arguing that it is problematic to equate the 'domain of *logos*' with the 'domain of language' in an abstract or universalised sense. He replies that "[c]ontrary to what Dreyfus implies, the domain of conceptual articulation includes thoughts that are not intelligible in abstraction from particular situations."[19] However, we saw in Chapter One that these situation-specific thoughts are still reflective rationalisations– that is, articulating them means that we have already taken a step away from the *moment* of coping, even when we have not universalised that experience as an abstract concept. Or, in the terms of Chapter Three, McDowell's discussion is restricted to the apophantic-*this*, which is produced by stepping back from the *momentary*, hermeneutic-*this* of absorbed action.

Although he overlooks (or rejects) non-conceptual content, *phronesis* in McDowell's

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1988, pp. 180-1; cf. 1995, p. 313.

[16] McDowell 1994, pp. 75-8, 84-5. In this sense, McDowell's 'space of reasons' differs, probably under Aristotle's influence, from Sellar's purely logical (in the modern sense) space of reasons.

[17] McDowell 1994, p. 79; Aristotle, *De Anima*, 427b10-15, 428a20-25.

[18] Dreyfus 2005, p. 51; cf. Heidegger 1997, pp. 111-2.

[19] McDowell 2007a, p. 342.

understanding exemplifies conceptual capacities that are distinct from the abstract, detached reflection traditionally identified with conceptuality. Dreyfus' ascription of this traditional understanding to McDowell leads to his initial *faux pas*, yet an important difference remains in spite of Dreyfus' acceptance of a shared understanding of the situation-specificity of *phronesis*. Where Dreyfus emphasises the absence of *logos* in *phronesis*, McDowell insists that in this context, "*logos* must be situation specific conceptual articulation"; that is, *phronesis* just is an articulation of the *logos* in a purely situation-specific sense.[20] Our question thus becomes one of the role of *logos* in *phronesis*. For while both thinkers seem to agree that reflective language is not at the heart of the issue, we find Dreyfus continuing to hold that this indicates non-conceptual content where McDowell argues for a situationally-specific *logos*– an apophantic-*this* that is never expressed or Named beyond the context in which it is encountered and used.

Having argued that the Dreyfus-McDowell debate centres on the place of *logos* in *phronesis*, in the next two parts of this Section I will examine *phronesis* in more depth to steer a course between the rival claims of Dreyfus and McDowell. Expanding on Aristotle's claim that *phronesis* both contains the *logos* and yet goes beyond it, I will argue that the disagreement arises from both thinkers emphasising different elements. In Section 4.2.1, I examine *phronesis*' relation to memory in order to draw parallels between its enactment and our unreflective skill performance. In Section 4.2.2, I elaborate on Heidegger's association of *phronesis* with the conscience to argue that *phronesis* exemplifies a *felt* or perceptual experience of conceptually-derived entities. While both parts take their cue from Aristotle, they also aim beyond textual interpretation, in order to ground his discussion in lived phenomena, and to argue that *phronesis* is a direct experience of the *logos* in a non-conceptual way.

4.2.1 – *Memory*

in which I examine the claim that* phronesis *cannot be forgotten in the light of recent work on memory systems, arguing that this demonstrates that* phronesis *is 'embodied' knowledge.

In this first part of the Section I will examine *phronesis*' relation to memory, looking at Aristotle's claim that it 'cannot be forgotten.' [21] By comparing this with contemporary accounts of memory systems, I will argue that memories involving the *logos* or explicit conceptual knowledge are much more easily forgotten than the

[20] *Ibid*.
[21] Aristotle 1140b25-30.

implicit memories that show parallels with *phronesis*. In this way, I will argue that *phronesis* involves an embodied, non-conceptual knowledge.

Aristotle argues that the soul (*psyche*) has two parts, one rational and one non-rational (*meta logou* and *aneu logou*).[22] At first glance, this claim could be taken to support my thesis of two layers of mindedness, one of which is shared with animals, and thus shifting the emphasis from the *zoon logon echon* to the *psyche logon echon*. Yet the case is not so black and white. With regards to *phronesis*, it is McDowell's understanding that appears, on the surface, to be the more straightforwardly Aristotelian, since Aristotle is explicit that *phronesis* is 'accompanied by rationality' (*meta logou*).[23] It is therefore problematic for us to liken *phronesis* to any behaviour we share with non-rational animals, even if we were to grant them a shared non-rational *psyche*. Crucial to our understanding of *phronesis*, therefore, is an understanding of how it is *meta logou*, and what exactly this signifies.

Meta logou is used adjectively for the five 'intellectual' *aretai* listed above, those which Aristotle ascribed to the rational part of the *psyche*– *episteme* and *sophia*, which deal with universals (which do not change), *techne* and *phronesis*, which deal with particular things (which do), and *noûs*, which, however, is accompanied by (or rather, accompanies) *logos* in a different way, as we will see in the next Chapter. Their relation to *legein*, or speech, means that they provide us with access to *truth* (*aletheia*), in the sense that making a true statement also articulates the possibility of what is false (in the same sense in which, in *De Anima*, Aristotle holds that understanding that something is 'white' equally implies an understanding of 'not-white').[24] This distinguishes it from perception (*aisthesis*), which cannot be 'false' and hence can neither be 'true' in this specific sense.[25] The *logos*, then, is not something that is contingently added to the intellectual *aretai*, but defines their ways of relating to the world. As Heidegger reads it, the "*meta* does not mean that speech is an arbitrary annex to the modes of *aletheuein*... [it] signifies that in these modes, right at the heart, lies *legein*."[26] It is from this same Aristotelian understanding of truth that McDowell begins his argument that the 'space of reasons' has an access to the world

[22] Aristotle 1139a1-5.
[23] Aristotle 1140a15-20.
[24] Aristotle 1139b10-20; *De Anima* 430b1-5. Cf. *De Interpretatione* 16a9-18.
[25] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 427b5-15. Compare the discussion of Haugeland and Pippin's confused dogs in Chapter Three, *supra*, pp. 97-8.
[26] Heidegger 1997, p. 19.

that ultimately goes beyond our simpler, first-natural access.[27]

However, despite the centrality of the *logos*, *phronesis* stretches beyond a purely intellectual understanding. Aristotle writes:

> Yet *phronesis* is also not merely a characteristic accompanied by reason [is not *meta logou monon*], a sign of which is that it is possible to forget such a characteristic [i.e., a state *meta logou*], but not to forget *phronesis*.[28]

Key to an understanding of how *phronesis* is *meta logou*, then, is understanding how it is not *meta logou monon*– not *merely meta logou*. What should interest us, then, is the way in which *phronesis* is *more* than a rational faculty. And the clue here seems to be in its special relationship to memory.

There is an obvious link back to technical skills here, in both the everyday and the esoteric sense. When we truly absorb a skill, to the point where we no longer need to call to mind the steps through which we learned to perform it, we have in a sense 'embodied' the skill to an extent where we cannot 'forget' it in the same way that we forget phone numbers or appointment times. When we really *know* something in the phronetic sense, it becomes almost instinctual, 'like riding a bike.' In some cases, this kind of embodied knowledge functions even as we lose the ability to articulate it– we may be unable to call the chord progression to mind until we are actually holding the guitar, after which our hand naturally finds the right shapes.

We can make sense of this forgettable-unforgettable distinction by relating it to recent work on memory. Psychiatrist and phenomenologist Thomas Fuchs describes this 'unforgettable' phronetic knowledge as 'body memory' or 'implicit memory,' distinguishing it from the 'explicit memory' which *can* be forgotten.[29] This largely follows the line Squire describes between 'declarative' and 'nondeclarative' memory, where the latter pertains more to skill and habit formation, and retains "knowledge expressed through performance rather than recollection."[30] Fuchs expands on the

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[27] McDowell 1994, pp. 76-85. It is from this point that my major disagreement with McDowell, which will be discussed at the end of this thesis, begins to crystallise. McDowell has faith that the *logos* of *aletheia* is able to give us direct insight into fundamental reality, while I will hold that this very movement disconnects us from ultimate truth.

[28] Aristotle 1140b25-30.

[29] Fuchs 2012, p. 11. However, Fuchs' (2012, p. 23-4) body memory is not strictly unforgettable, but rather is much less liable to being lost than explicit memory. Cf. Tulving 2005, p. 9.

[30] Squire 1994, p. 205.

phenomenology of body memory, noting that it comes in many varieties, which correspond to the everyday and esoteric expertises I discussed earlier. 'Procedural' body memory, for example, describes the way I know my way around a keyboard, and how while I may be unable to recall whether the 'C' or the 'V' key is next to the 'X' when I'm away from my computer, I have no problem finding the right keys when I'm immersed in the act of touch-typing.[31] Yet body memory also extends beyond such 'automatic' tasks to a 'situative' memory that helps us orient ourselves in our environment, from the simple 'at-home' feeling we have walking around a familiar house even in the dark, to the more complex familiarity that an expert acquires after years of experience, such as the 'sixth sense' that might alert an expert sailor to an oncoming storm.[32] Such skills are parallel to *phronesis* in that the expert may not be able to articulate just how they know what they know; rather, they are keying into multiple, subtle signs. This inarticulable body memory has its dark side with the 'traumatic' memory that lingers in the phobias and anxieties that follow surviving a horrific event, and which may be triggered by similar situations even if the original experience is forgotten or repressed.[33] Yet here, as with embodied skills, the knowledge has not been forgotten in the way that we forget facts, but rather "what we have forgotten, has become what we are."[34]

Recent work on explicit or declarative memory systems also supports a distinction between *phronesis* and embodied skills on the one hand, and articulable memories on the other. Tulving famously distinguishes between 'semantic' and 'episodic' memory.[35] Episodic memory involves what Tulving describes as "mental time travel," through which we are able to relive past events by re-experiencing them in a distanced yet 'inner' way (as well as being able to imagine and anticipate possible future events).[36] Tulving argues that episodic memory– a "recently evolved, late developing, and early deteriorating brain/mind memory system"– is central to our experience as the "owner" of memories and thoughts.[37] Tulving calls this sensation of ownership 'autonoetic consciousness' or 'autonoesis' and argues that it is crucial to our sense of being a self, since it makes it possible for us to identify ourselves as the subject of past

[31] Fuchs 2012, p. 12.
[32] *Ibid*, pp. 13-4.
[33] *Ibid*, pp. 17-8.
[34] *Ibid*, p. 13.
[35] Tulving 1972, 1983, 2005.
[36] Tulving 2005, pp. 6-7. Such 're-experiencing' has a detached, observational character to it, being clearly experienced *as* a memory, unlike body memory which– as encountered most vividly in the 'traumatic' body memory accompanying post-traumatic stress disorder– is experienced as though the recalled event were actually happening again.
[37] *Ibid*, p. 9.

experiences and the agent of past (and planned) thoughts and actions, thus giving rise to a sense of narrative continuity.

Episodic memory is contrasted with 'semantic' memory, which is experienced only in the present as a response to specific, ongoing activities. Where a sense of time is inextricable from episodic memory, semantic memory has "no special relation to time."[38] It is a memory *of* facts or of *how* to do things, separate from the context in which they are done or as part of a life-narrative. Tulving cites brain-damaged subjects who have lost their episodic memory capabilities while their semantic capacities remain intact. One typical subject, for example, is able to remember facts such as their previous address, and to recognise that house when standing in front of it, yet lacks any recollection of events associated with it.[39] Such people remain "capable of impressive feats of intelligence," problem-solving, communication, and the ability to learn skills, yet lose their capacity to draw upon information that does not belong to the context of their activity.[40]

Tulving argues that while we share semantic memory with other animals, episodic memory is confined to humans.[41] More specifically, it is confined to human beings after a particular stage of development, as young children don't seem to acquire episodic memory until the ages of three to six years. For example, Tulving cites an experiment where young children were taught a novel and unusual colour name (for example, 'chartreuse').[42] After correctly demonstrating their knowledge of the colour, the children were asked how they had learned the word. While the older children (five to six years old) would recount being taught earlier in the day, four year olds typically asserted that they 'always knew' the word. Tulving further hypothesises that 'childhood amnesia' (the fact that most of us retain very few memories from before the age of around four) is explained by our simply not having developed episodic memory before that age.[43] Tulving hypothesises that, since young children lack episodic memory, animals almost certainly lack it as well. Pippin's dog, for example, whom we met in Chapter Three, does not act as though her master seemed to be an intruder only moments before.[44] Semantic memory alone is enough to account for the way a dog can remember where the bone is buried or where the rabbits are usually

[38] *Ibid*, p. 18.
[39] *Ibid*, pp. 24-5.
[40] *Ibid*, pp. 25-6.
[41] *Ibid*, p. 14.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 32.
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] Pippin 2013, p. 101; *supra*, p. 98.

found on the daily walk, without needing to postulate that it remembers the *act* of burying the bone, or the time it so very nearly caught a rabbit.

This offers interesting support for our thesis so far. Episodic memory and autonoesis are associated with the capacity to take something apophantically-*as* something that I have argued is restricted to human beings. On the other hand, the autonomous semantic memory system is shared with animals and pre-linguistic infants, and– as the cases of young children and Tulving's episodically-amnesiac subjects show– is sufficient for smooth coping. Coping with a hermeneutic-*this*, then, seems to involve a different form of memory, one which is not so easily forgotten as the episodic memory that characterises more explicit knowledge. Similarly, there is at least a phenomenological link with the 'expertise-induced amnesia' discussed in Chapter Two, where Bielock and her colleagues confirmed the anecdotal experience of many athletes and performers who lack, or have a significantly different quality of, memories from the intense *flow* of peak performance.[45] If, therefore, *phronesis* "cannot be forgotten," it would appear to belong rather to the region of semantic memory, of situationally-evoked skilled responsiveness, than to the realm of abstract thought that autonoesis makes possible. In a similar way, such abstract thought is connected to an ability to understand entities as persistent over time as well as out of a particular time-context, and hence, in Aristotle's terms, belongs to the *aretai* that are concerned with universals (i.e., *episteme* and *sophia*), rather than *phronesis*, which is concerned with the "ultimate particular thing," in this *moment*, now.[46]

Fuchs' phenomenology and Tulving's psychology have supported and refined Aristotle's distinction between the facts we forget and the phronetic knowledge we cannot. Implicit and embodied– that is, non-declarative and semantic– memories are, strictly speaking, harder (though not quite impossible) to forget, and people suffering amnesia or dementia continue to display implicit body memory even in the absence of almost all episodic memory.[47] It seems clear that Aristotle is referring to the relatively fragile explicit or episodic memory as a contrast to *phronesis*. And it is through this contrast that we see the entanglement of episodic memory, the (autonoetic) self, and the *logos*.[48]

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[45] *Supra*, p. 85; cf. Bielock *et al*. 2001, 2003. It seems unlikely to be coincidental that the brain regions associated with episodic memory are the same as those associated with abstract reasoning, and which are lacking in most non-human animals.

[46] Aristotle, 1142a25-30.

[47] Tulving 2005, p. 23-4; Fuchs 2012, pp. 20-1.

[48] The parallels between episodic memory acquisition, autonoesis, and McDowell's concept of *Bildung*

This contrast becomes clearer in Heidegger's expansion on the relation of *phronesis* and memory through his reading of truth or *aletheia* as 'unconcealing.' *Phronesis* cannot be forgotten (*lethe*) because it is not a revealing (*aletheia*) in a way that involves apophansis.[49] One cannot conceal what cannot be unconcealed. Or less cryptically, the kind of knowledge that *phronesis* involves is not the kind used to make propositional judgements that are true and false. This stands in contrast to the earlier description of the *aretai meta logou* as *aletheuein* or unconcealers. Yet it runs together with Heidegger's rejection of the *logos* as the proper place of truth, for the *logos apophantikos* is taken as the place of *pseudos* or falsehood, since every proposition directs us into understanding an entity from a concrete and particular angle.[50] That is, it freezes our understanding in the terms of a single point of view– what we call 'white' is now understood as different from 'not-white' and the same as other 'whites,' even those beyond the immediate situation.[51] For example, when I Name the wall 'white,' I am understanding the wall's colour– both in the sunny patches and the shadowy corners– in the same way as I understand the colour of snow or of clouds. As such, the *logos* directs us away from the unique situation, from particulars to abstract universals.[52] Yet what is important about *phronesis*– for Heidegger and Dreyfus as well as for McDowell– is precisely its focus on the unique, specific situation.

We therefore find the apparently contradictory description of *phronesis* as an *aletheuein meta logou* and yet beyond (*mēn monon*) it, with a grasp of truth that goes beyond the dialogical play of opposites that the *logos* implies. Our examination of memory has shown that *phronesis* bears more resemblance to the *logos*-free embodied memory than it does to explicit memory. It is still unclear, however, exactly what this means in practice. In the remaining part of this Section, I will delve deeper into Heidegger's understanding of *phronesis* as 'conscience' in order to clarify the experience of *phronesis* as direct, imperative perception.

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will become very significant as we continue.

[49] Cf. Elden 2006, p. 55.

[50] Heidegger 1997, p. 125; cf. p. 18.

[51] Cf. *supra*, p. 124.

[52] Cf. Heidegger's (1995, pp. 343-5) rejection in his 1929-30 lectures of the phrase 'the board is black' as an example that could give us any real insight into the board's being, preferring rather the embedded phrase “the board is badly-positioned.”

4.2.2 – *Conscience*

in which I argue that* phronesis*' association with the conscience signifies that it is an experience of conceptual entities in a non-conceptual way.

Gadamer– Heidegger's student and one of McDowell's major influences– recalls that Heidegger associated *phronesis* with the conscience.[53] 'Conscience' (*Gewissen*) is one of the major themes of Division Two of *Being and Time*, where it is highlighted as a call to *Eigentlichkeit*.[54] The conscience is a call from the tranquillising comfort of *das Man* to resoluteness, an "*authentic Being-one's-Self*." [55] That is, through the conscience's call Dasein wrenches itself away from letting itself be carried along by having decisions made in advance by 'the way things just are.' It 'chooses itself,' and is thereby individualised, taking ownership of itself as a *self*.[56] 'Self' here is no detached ego, for

> [r]esoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others.[57]

These two modes of Being– concernful (*besorgende*) and solicitous (*fürsorgende*)– are united in that they involve the circumspection (*Umsicht*) of everyday dealings (*Umgänge*).[58] With the conscience and the call to resoluteness, then, we see a movement in our coping away from the *uneigentlich* everyday towards an owned mode of coping, marked by the presence of the self right there in the dealings with equipment or Others, which we find echoed in the qualitatively different form of concentrated absorption of *flow* that was discussed in Chapter Two. A further characteristic of this authentic coping is the movement away from the stereotyped, automatic reactions of the 'general situation (*Lage*)' to a spontaneous coping in the 'specific situation (*Situation*).'[59]

> One would completely misunderstand the phenomenon of resoluteness if one should want to suppose that this consists simply in taking up possibilities which have been proposed and recommended, and seizing hold of them. *The resolution is precisely the*

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[53] See Elden 2006, p. 55.
[54] Heidegger 1962, pp. 343-4.
[55] *Ibid*, p. 344, Heidegger's emphasis.
[56] *Ibid*, p. 334.
[57] *Ibid*, p. 344.
[58] Recall Heidegger's earlier definition of *phronesis* as *fürsorgende Umsicht*, *supra*, p. 120, n. 11.
[59] Heidegger 1962, p. 346.

disclosive projection and determination of what is factically possible at the time.[60]

The connection to *phronesis* as authentic coping starts to become clearer. Kisiel argues that for Heidegger, the state or habit of *phronesis* "is what it is by its being embedded in *praxis*," as a "'voice' beyond *logos*."[61] That is to say, *phronesis* is not the kind of knowledge that we 'have' in an abstract sense. As Gadamer puts it, "we do not possess moral knowledge in such a way that we already have it and *then* apply it to specific situations."[62] In this sense, it has more in common with embodied skill than with thought. A master potter does not need to decide how to curve the edge of the clay she is throwing, nor does an expert cyclist need to think about how far to lean into a curve. In both these cases, as with *phronesis*, our knowledge is something we enact in a process of responsive adjustments to the evolving situation.

Most significantly, the 'call of conscience' is not experienced as a personal decision, but directly and unbidden.[63] Furthermore, our conscience is not an opinion that can be changed by rational propositions; it cannot be reasoned with. Of course, our conscience may call us to different decisions over time as our sense of what is appropriate to do evolves via explicit deliberation, yet the point remains that we cannot *wilfully* change what we actually believe, even if we come to believe that we *should* change those beliefs and even *choose* to attempt such a change.[64] As with learning a skill, where we might theoretically *know* how to do something without being able to actually do it, we can also '*know*' an action is right without being able to shake the feeling that it is actually wrong.

None of this implies that we always follow our conscience or even that we should, but simply that we are always aware of when we are acting against it. More subtly– and of key relevance to our investigation– it also reflects the way we completely absorb practices into our ways of life. Think, for example of how difficult it is to drive through a red light, even when the street is deserted. While we can reason that doing so would be a victimless crime– it's three in the morning, it's well-lit, we can clearly see there is no one around, there are no cameras to record us– the red light itself exerts a push

[60] *Ibid*, p. 345, Heidegger's emphasis.
[61] Kisiel 1993, p. 306.
[62] Gadamer 1989, p. 317, my emphasis.
[63] Heidegger 1962, p. 320.
[64] Or at least, changing one's beliefs involves not an intellectual decision, but coming to embody and internalise a new relationship to the world. We could draw a comparison here with the advice often given to novices or converts to spiritual practices– most famously by Pascal (1962, pp. 200-205) in his 'Wager'– that, despite whatever doubts one might have, if one acts as though one believes– if one follows the set practices– sooner or later belief will come.

against us almost as of a physical force.

It may be contested here, however, that this example does not show a call to authenticity, but precisely demonstrates the inauthenticity of *das Man*, where we step back from choosing and let the normative structures of the world 'do the work' for us.[65] However, we could also say that, in surrendering to social norms, conscience itself does not appear. 'Tranquillised' Dasein would not consider running the light; only on considering an alternative course of action do we experience the "abrupt arousal" of conscience, after which *das Man* "collapses."[66] Conscience arises with an understanding of possibilities, of taking ownership of one's actions. As the call to authenticity, it comes together with a questioning of the norms of *das Man*. However, being authentic– owning one's actions– does not mean breaking social norms simply for the sake of doing so. Conscience instead awakens us to recognising the good of the norms we do or do not follow. The central point remains that conscience's call is immediate and silent. Even if we choose to go anyway and drive through the red light, the movement is experienced with a physical heaviness that is experienced more as a perceptual sensation than a conceptual doubt.

Conscience, then, is experienced similarly to Merleau-Ponty's 'optimal grip' or 'best hold' (*meilleure prise*), the unthought, felt solicitation to maintain or improve one's position in an activity, which Dreyfus draws on heavily in his description of embodied coping.[67] It is to express the same point that Aristotle calls *phronesis* an *aisthesis*, a perception:

> [*P*]*hronesis* is concerned with the ultimate particular thing, of which there is not an *episteme* but rather a perception, and a perception not of things peculiar to one of the senses, but a perception of the sort by which we perceive that the ultimate particular thing, in mathematics, is a triangle.[68]

Kisiel argues that Heidegger took this to mean that *phronesis* "brings us into the realm of *praxis*, human action, the getting about of human life with itself."[69] *Phronesis*, therefore, acts as a bridge between the rational and the perceptual, between the *meta*

[65] Cf. Ratcliffe 2007, p. 73; *supra*, p. 87.
[66] Heidegger 1962, pp. 316-7.
[67] Merleau-Ponty 1945/2012, pp. 308-9/278-9. Cf. Merleau-Ponty 2012, pp. 261; Dreyfus 2007a, p. 358. Note also that for Aristotle, the *aretai* are located at the *mesotes* or mean between excess and deficiency.
[68] Aristotle, 1142a25-30.
[69] Kisiel 1993, p. 267.

logou and the *aneu logou*, insofar as it deals with the minded content of the *logos*, and yet deals with it in a way that experientially bypasses rational thought, being instead directly perceived as a solicitation or affordance on the level of our purely practical dealings.

However, as Aristotle points out in the above-quoted statement, this is not a perception in the sense of a simple sensation, but a direct understanding, as of a mathematical object. Bartlett and Collins note that there are two ways of understanding the statement.[70] In the first, attributed to Albertus Magnus, the triangle is 'ultimate' as the product of a logical reduction to starting premises. The second, attributed to Aquinas, understands the triangle as simply an example of something ultimate in the sense that "we simply perceive a given particular thing as what it is and must rely on that perception in whatever we may go on to say about it."[71] The Aquinian reading is more consistent with my argument so far, supporting an understanding that Aristotle here is describing a direct sensory perception of entities that we would otherwise expect could only be known *meta logou*. This certainly echoes the Heideggerian understanding in *Being and Time*, where he argues that what we "'first' hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motor-cycle."[72] Our perception rarely reveals 'pure' sense-data, but a whole that is immediately and unreflectively experienced as significant. This point also connects to Heidegger's earlier, more explicitly Aristotelian thoughts, such as his assertion that "[c]ircumspecting [i.e., *phronesis*[73]] culminates in... something akin to *noûs* in its simplicity free of an [apophantic] as-structure."[74]

The introduction of *noûs* here is an important move, and its role as an exclusively human form of perception will be the topic of the next Chapter. But briefly, as mentioned above, *noûs* is mentioned as one of the five rational virtues, but with a special relation to *logos*. Where *sophia* and *episteme* are held to do with universals and *phronesis* and *techne* with particulars, *noûs* is described as a form of perception that links the two groups. For Aristotle,

> the universals arise from the particulars. Of these, then, one must have a perception,

[70] Bartlett & Collins in Aristotle 2011, p. 126, n. 44.
[71] *Ibid*. Cf. Aquinas 1993**,** pp. 384-5 (lecs. 1214-5), where he claims that even animals can be "prudent," thus offering a direct link to what I have called the non-conceptual direct perception that we share with animals.
[72] Heidegger 1962, p. 207.
[73] *Supra*, p. 120.
[74] Quoted in Kisiel 1993, p. 267; cf. Heidegger 1992, pp. 381-2.

> and this perception is *noûs*.[75]

Heidegger argues that *noûs* is itself *aneu logou* but gives access to the *logos* as a direct form of perception.[76] Yet this kind of perception is not that of raw, animal primitives, but of complex, learned conceptual objects. As Aristotle points out, *aisthesis* is always of wholes– of streets, houses, trees or people.[77] Such wholes, we could argue, might also be taken in some way by animals hermeneutically-*as* such. Yet humans can also directly perceive triangles, stop-signs, violins, and words *as* such, in a direct, hermeneutic way. To account for this phenomenon, we need to re-evaluate the equation of the human and animal hermeneutic-'as'es of the previous Chapter. While certainly animals, from bees to rats to monkeys, are capable of being trained to associate a whole variety of signs with specific actions, the richness of that significance is limited in comparison to the human experience. When we hear the motorbike arriving, we hear it for what it is, *a motorbike*, something more than it is for the dog whose master's arrival it simply announces. *Phronesis*, then, as *meta logou* and yet experienced as a *logos*-free *aisthesis* akin to *noûs*, suggests a mode of experiencing cognitive, conceptual entities as we would experience a direct, bodily solicitation.

In the two parts of this Section, I have grounded our understanding of *phronesis* in two phenomena. Firstly, I discussed *phronesis*'s relation to memory in order to show that *phronesis* is enacted and experienced in the same way as an embodied skill, with a direct seeing that bypasses rational, deliberative thought. In the second part, I expanded on the association of *phronesis* with the conscience to argue that it is experienced as a direct perception, a felt tension akin to Merleau-Ponty's 'optimal grip.' In both, I argued that this form of coping differs from the simpler, technical coping that I previously argued we share with other animals, in that the direct perception is of entities that only have their being through shared, artificial human concepts– such as stoplights or triangles. In closing this Chapter, I wish to suggest that the phenomenon of *phronesis* demonstrates a form of coping that draws upon this direct perception of the *logos*, albeit in a non-conceptual way.

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[75] Aristotle 1143b5-10.
[76] Heidegger 1992, p. 380. Cf. Kisiel 1993, pp. 267, 285.
[77] Aristotle 1142a28.

4.3 – *Post-conceptuality*

***in which I argue that* phronesis *is not* non-*conceptual* *but* post-*conceptual*– *the navigation of conceptual second-nature in a direct, non-conceptual way*.**

In the previous sections I have been exploring *phronesis* in order to shed light on the relation of coping and concepts. It is worth re-emphasising that both Heidegger and McDowell draw upon *phronesis* as an *example* of a broader species of cognition. In this final section, I will expand the discussion away from *phronesis* to the form of cognition it exemplifies, and argue against McDowell that it is not conceptual in the way he holds. Yet I shall draw upon the previous discussion to argue that Dreyfus cannot hold that it is simply non-conceptual in a way that we share with infants and animals. Instead, I shall follow Charles Taylor in calling it *post-conceptual*– the navigation of our second-natural worlds in a non-conceptual way.

We saw above that McDowell focuses on the presence of *logos* in *phronesis*, denying that the presence of the linguistic implies a context-free abstraction. If that were the case, he argues, it would be impossible to make statements like '*this* is beautiful,' which can only make sense in a situationally-specific context.[78] Hence rationality, as far as it is tied to language, must not be understood only as situationally-independent, but as part of how the *phronimos* deals with an immediate situation. *Phronesis*– like all human cognition in McDowell's view– must be rational (*vernünftig*) to the core.

Yet in this statement we again find the centrality of the apophantic-'*this*' in McDowell's conception of rationality, and here it becomes apparent that he is misplacing it into *phronesis*. For '*this* is beautiful,' while certainly only meaningful in a specific situation, is a *judgement*, an assertion of properties. An 'assertive judgement' in this context, as we saw in Chapter Three, means that a change in content has occurred through a transition in the 'as'-structure. By invoking an apophantic-*this*, McDowell's speaker has left the domain of smooth-coping. With this argument, McDowell has erroneously emphasised situation-specificity as the defining factor in *phronesis*, rather than the embodied mode of coping that I have argued for above. While we can no doubt have situation-specific awareness of something *as* an object, McDowell has not shown that this is the *phronimos*' experience, only that she can break into that experience from the hermeneutic.

[78] McDowell 2007a, p. 342.

Nonetheless, his reading of *logos* as the "domain of the definable" still leaves some room to argue that the *logos* is active in *phronesis*.[79] In McDowell's original thesis, the content of coping is considered rational because it is available *immediately* as the content of a judgement. Since McDowell denies that any change of content akin to the assertive transition from hermeneutic to apophantic takes place, he might want to describe the *phronimos*' actions themselves as judgements. The expert certainly acts as though they have judged– a cricketer's throw implies *some* judgement of the distance and necessary force. But regarding the *immediacy* of that content *as* judgement, the question is rather over whether the *phronimos*' judgement is propositional in form.

As we have seen, 'judgement,' in the Aristotelian sense used by Heidegger, is something that can be true and false, and hence is a proposition about an apophantically-revealed entity, the *logos*. This most obviously refers to statements made in natural language. But as Wittgenstein reminds us, we very often make judgements that bypass explicit propositional language– say, by taking a measurement with our fingers.[80] However, such a judgement is still an example of apophantic interpretation. It reveals a '*this*'– the measured object– which is articulated via its property– its length (compare Heidegger's description of *assertion*, discussed above, where the hammer is articulated by its asserted property of heaviness in the action of dropping it[81]). This kind of content is not immediately drawn from the action, but is precisely mediated by the assertive transition into the apophantic-*this*.

A truly hermeneutic judgement in this context would be our reflexively pressing our foot– as we see the light turn orange– on either the accelerator or the brake. Such a 'judgement,' achieved in the fluidity of the action, has no objective '*this*' to guide it, but is strongly felt as a pull to either speed across the line or to stop before it. It draws heavily on a wealth of knowledge and experience, applied, adjusted or ignored, depending on a situation so varied– in terms of the time and distance to stop, the particular car's systems, the general traffic, and the context of our journey– as to be completely unique. Yet while all of these variables make sense only in a complex,

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[79] *Ibid*.

[80] Wittgenstein 2009, p. 114 (§ 330). Wittgenstein does not mention using one's fingers, but it emphasises his point. His other example in that paragraph– of discovering a pencil to be blunt but deciding to use it anyway– bears interesting parallels to Heidegger's (1962, pp. 102-3) account of equipment's becoming 'conspicuous' and therefore *unzuhanden*.

[81] Heidegger 1962, p. 196.

normative structure, our judgement is one of immediate bodily perception and action that does not call them into account as weighted 'reasons.'

Such a judgement is of a kind with that of the *phronimos*, as Charles Taylor describes it. Even when the *phronimos* deliberates,

> his actions will be 'post' or 'ultra' conceptual, because his training has opened him to situations with refined meanings that he can sense and respond to, way beyond his ability to articulate them conceptually.[82]

This thought becomes clearer if we read the training Taylor mentions in conjunction with Dreyfus and Dreyfus' account of skill acquisition.[83] The embodiment of skills that takes place indeed involves coming to experience an apophantic-*this* as a hermeneutic solicitation. And Dreyfus, in his debate with McDowell, rightly observes that the most significant feature of expert coping is that entities are experienced as ready-to-hand. Words, shapes, traffic lights, all disappear into the activity, such that they are experienced phenomenologically as pushes and pulls to an 'optimal grip' (and hence, in the previous Chapter, we could compare our frisbee-catching with the dog's). But such an observation leaves out an important point: that all the skills Dreyfus discusses– from driving to baseball to chess– require an awareness of things as *vorhanden* before they can get off the ground.

To be sure, we may learn some skills without breaking out of purely hermeneutic understanding. The motor skills that infants learn, including even perhaps the manipulation of tools like spoons, probably fall into this category. But it is fair to say that by the time we are language-users, all of our learning at least *begins* with a conceptual awareness of *what* we are using to do *what*. Not only that, but we become aware that there are also *ways* to do what we do. This is an important distinction. While no doubt a chimp could learn to use a spoon or a mug to eat or drink, it seems unlikely that it could learn to hold that spoon 'properly,' with 'good manners.' Furthermore, it does not get solicited to leave the mug on the sink when it is finished, nor to wash it and stack it on the top of the dish-rack to leave room for the bowls below.

And so with post-conceptual coping, we find a return of the points we saw Haugeland

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[82] Taylor in Dreyfus 2005, pp. 62-3, n. 23.
[83] Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, pp. 19-35.

raise about culture in Chapter Three. But the key lesson is not that the culture gives the equipment its readiness-to-hand, but that culturally-defined objects and norms are *experienced* in a ready-to-hand way. And by arguing for *post-* rather than non-conceptual awareness in human coping to account for this central role of culture, we can take an important point from McDowell without going so far as to accept his claim that conceptuality is pervasive 'all the way out.' Post-conceptuality– exemplified by *phronesis*– means coping with the ready-to-hand within our second-nature worlds.

As we acquire a language and culture (and autonoesis) through the process of *Bildung*, we are introduced to entities that simply don't exist in the first natural world that infants share with animals and navigate via basic, non-conceptual motor intentionality. We develop the ability to reflect and objectify entities as present-at-hand, and yet as we cope with them, our awareness is not of them *as* objects, even if it is still informed by this and presupposes it. We navigate our second-nature worlds with a circumspective awareness that is as embodied and situation-specific as first natural reflexivity, and yet the hermeneutic-objects of that awareness are constructed from the web of conceptual, cultural practices we have been initiated into. Understanding this coping as post-conceptual, then, allows us to steer a middle course between Dreyfus and McDowell. McDowell errs by assuming that, since second-nature is brought into being by language and culture– by a connection to the *logos*– our awareness remains of concepts *as* concepts. Yet Dreyfus goes too far in holding that, since we are not dealing with the *logos as* the *logos*, it has disappeared. The third, middle possibility is that, with a post-conceptual awareness, we are dealing with the *logos* circumspectively. As with *phronesis*, post-conceptual coping is not *meta logou monon*, but both *meta* and *aneu logou*.

Perhaps most importantly, it should be stressed that during coping we have the possibility of asserting things apophantically-anew at any time. As significant a phenomenological feature as the *flow* is, it tends to be very brief, and whether we enter it during sport, music, driving or cooking, our awareness is constantly brought back to the experience of *things*. As a phenomenologist, Heidegger sought to isolate the elements of our experience and articulate them independently, even though our awareness of things as ready-to-hand and as present-at-hand overlap in nearly all of our activities. In this sense, Aristotle, too, was a phenomenologist. It is worth reflecting that *phronesis* is but one of many *aretai*, and as philosophically useful as it is to isolate the elements of our experience, their manifestation in our lives is always in tandem.

I have argued in this final Section that *phronesis* is an example of a wider form of awareness that, following Taylor, I have called *post-conceptual*. I have argued that this form of awareness describes circumspective coping in the conceptually-constructed second-natural world, thus steering a middle way between Dreyfus, who insists that all of our coping is of a non-conceptual kind shared with infants and animals, and McDowell, who holds that second-nature implies immediate experience of concepts *as* concepts.

Conclusions

In this Chapter I have refined the arguments developed in the previous Chapters of Part One to argue that human coping is not simply non-conceptual but *post-conceptual*. By 'post-conceptual,' I mean that we cope with the elements of our conceptually-constituted second-nature worlds in a non-conceptual way. In doing so, I have steered a middle course between the positions of Dreyfus and McDowell, incorporating Dreyfus' phenomenological account of skill acquisition with McDowell's account of conceptually-mediated *Bildung*.

I have reached this conclusion through an exploration of Aristotle's discussion of *phronesis*, which Dreyfus, through Heidegger, and McDowell drew upon as an exemplar of human coping. In the first Section, I established *phronesis* as an 'authentic practical understanding,' outlining its overlap with *techne* and more practical coping in order to show the blurred line between ethical and technical expertise. I argued that *phronesis*, and the wider form of coping it exemplifies, is related to *eigentlich* esoteric coping in being a spontaneous, rather than automatic, reaction to the immediate situation.

I then argued that, in Aristotelian terms, the debate between Dreyfus and McDowell centres on the role of the *logos* in *phronesis*. Their disagreement is made plainer when we see that Aristotle held *phronesis* to be both *meta* and *aneu logou*– accompanied by, and yet free from, the *logos*– and the two contemporary figures respectively emphasise a different aspect. I therefore demonstrated, by grounding *phronesis* in the phenomena of memory and the conscience, that although, as McDowell claims, *phronesis* acts on rational concepts, these concepts are experienced in a bodily and immediate way, akin to direct perception.

This direct, perceptual experience is distinct from the apophantic content of

judgements (in the sense of 'truth'– *aletheia*– and 'falsity'– *pseudesthai*) and hence cannot properly be called conceptual. I therefore argued in the final section that our phronetic judgements are rather post-conceptual, responding to cultural, second-natural entities as direct, non-conceptual solicitations. In so arguing, I refined Dreyfus' and my own earlier claims that our ready-to-hand coping is identical with animal and pre-linguistic human behaviour. Post-conceptual coping cannot be equated entirely with non-conceptual coping, since although it shares a direct perception of affordances, it is enriched by the vaster range of possibilities available to rational animals who dwell in a second-nature 'world.'

Thus, although throughout Part One I have emphasised our continuity with non-human animals, in Part Two I will explore our divergence. I begin in the next Chapter with an exploration of *noûs*, which Heidegger equated with *vernehmen*, an exclusively human form of perception. As we saw briefly above, although he considered *noûs aneu logou*, it provides us with a direct perception of the *logos*. In Part Two, therefore, I will argue for the centrality of logos, of language, in all aspects of the human relationship to the world.

Part Two

Chapter Five
Conceptual Perception

In Part One, I argued that human cognition comprises two layers, whose distinction lies in the way entities are experienced. The first way, experienced during our smooth-coping, I originally called 'non-conceptual,' describing it as the mode through which we experience entities hermeneutically-as solicitations within the tasks we are immersed in. In the final Chapter of Part One, I refined our understanding of this mode of cognition and called it '*post*-conceptual,' in order to highlight that many (if not most) of the entities we deal with through this mode gain their significance via our immersion in a conceptually-mediated second nature or 'world.' Both of these modes are distinct from that mode of cognition I called 'conceptual.' This latter is a reflective awareness of entities *as entities*, through which we experience them as detached from the context of a particular task, apophantically-as an isolated '*this*.'

I initially argued that we shared the non-conceptual layer with non-rational animals. Seeing our coping in the light of 'post-conceptuality,' this point is better re-phrased as saying that the particular form of experience in question (that is, of entities hermeneutically-*as*) is found in both non- and post-conceptual dealings, in non-rational and rational animals respectively. In this Chapter, I will begin to strengthen the links I have posited between language, rationality and conceptual experience by returning to the transition between layers that I briefly discussed as 'Naming' in Chapter One. In doing so, we should be able to see more clearly how it is that humans diverge from other animals, as this transition belongs only to rational animals– that is, to *zoa logon echonta*, 'animals who have *logos*.' I will argue that having *logos*– language or speech– is central to the conceptual mode of understanding entities apophantically. In doing so, however, I will argue that we need to think of language within the context of a broader capacity for understanding the world; indeed, I will argue that *logos* is essentially the content of this form of perceptual understanding. Our possession of this capacity– which, following Heidegger, I will identify with *noûs*– makes it possible for us to say that humans inhabit the world *linguistically*.

I will argue this by returning to the *aretai meta logou*, focusing now of *noûs*. *Noûs* is generally translated as 'mind' or 'intellect,' and is related to the verb *noein*, 'to understand' or 'to see' in an intellectual manner.[1] We saw in the previous Chapter that

[1] The connection between perception– especially sight– and understanding has long been noted by

noûs is a special kind of intellectual virtue, differing from the others in that it generates the *logos*, and is experienced as a kind of perception or *aisthesis*. In this Chapter, I introduce *noûs* as it appears in Aristotle, before going on to discuss how Heidegger expands on it in *Being and Time* and beyond as *vernehmen*, 'apprehending,' an exclusively human form of perception. I aim to show how both thinkers isolate a conceptual faculty that is experienced as a form of sensory perception.[2] I will explore and unpack *noûs* through Heidegger's understanding of it as *vernehmen*, the act of apprehension. I will argue that in Heidegger's understanding, *vernehmen* is an exclusively human form of perception, differing from the animal's, for whom it is unavailable. *Vernehmen*, I will argue, is a direct perception of a thing apophantically-*as* such; it is a direct perception of the *logos*. Language, I will therefore argue, is founded upon a perceptual capacity that enables the world to be experienced as things that can thereafter be communicated, although I will later suggest that such a faculty develops in tandem with our intersubjective awareness.

5.1 – Noûs *in Aristotle*

***in which I outline Aristotle's account of* noesis *and* noûs.**

We saw in the previous Chapter that *phronesis* is considered both *meta* and *aneu logou*– both rational and non-rational– insofar as, although it involves the *logos*, it is experienced rather as an *aisthesis*, a perception.[3] We also saw that, in Heidegger's understanding, *phronesis* "culminates... in something akin to *noûs*," meaning that it is experienced as the immediate understanding of something as a whole.[4] According to Aristotle, *noûs* shares with *phronesis* (as well as *synesis*– 'comprehension'– and *gnomeis*– 'judgement') a concern with 'ultimate, particular things.'[5]

Like *phronesis*, then, *noûs* is described as both *meta* and *aneu logou*. As mentioned above, Heidegger considered *noûs* to be itself *aneu logou*, yet included in the intellectual virtues because it gives rise to their possibility[6]; indeed, the phrase 'intellectual virtues' translates *aretai dianoetikai*, which we might better understand as 'capacities performed through (or after) *noesis*'– that is, capacities whose content

philosophers, most famously by Augustine (2002, pp.62-3 [11.1.2]).

2 The idea that the mind is a sense is common in Indian philosophy. See, e.g., Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, Books III and IV (Roebuck 2003, pp. 43-4, 69-70).

3 *Supra*, pp. 133-4.

4 Heidegger in Kisiel 1993, p. 267; cf. Heidegger 1992, pp. 381-2.

5 Aristotle 1143a25-30. Regarding citations of Aristotle, see p. 115, n. 2.

6 Heidegger 1992, p. 380.

is produced by the enactment of *noûs*, or which 'discuss' such content. Thus, in a certain sense, the *logos* is dependent on *noûs*, as it is through *noûs*– as a form of perception– that we have access to the *logos*. It is the bridge between understanding *aneu* and *meta logou*. Aristotle states that

> *noûs* is concerned with the ultimate things in both directions, for [what grasps] both the first defining boundaries and the ultimate particulars is *noûs* and not *logos*. That is, on the one hand, *noûs* pertaining to demonstrations grasps the unchanging first defining boundaries; on the other hand, *noûs* in matters of action grasps also the ultimate particular thing that admits of being otherwise... For these ultimate particulars are the principles [*archei*] of that for the sake of which one acts: the universals arise from the particulars. Of these, then, one must have a perception, and this perception is *noûs*.[7]

Noûs, therefore, is understood by Aristotle as a form of perception, one through which we grasp the particulars and so abstract from them the universals.[8] "For as there is sight in the body," Aristotle says, "so there is *noûs* in the soul [*psyche*]."[9] It is, however, a peculiar form of perception, and perhaps only analogous to the bodily senses (*aistheseis*). Unlike our sight, which can be blinded by a bright light, or our hearing, which is dulled by loud sounds, *noûs* is not weakened by exposure to strong thoughts.[10] And, as will prove important in conjunction with our later discussion of second nature, Aristotle holds that *noûs* is something which develops, and is absent in both animals and children.[11]

As a form of perception, *noûs* 'grasps' the boundaries and ultimate particulars. Through *noesis*, that which is seen as the *logos* and expressed through the *logos apophantikos* becomes understood as universal.[12] We therefore find *noûs* right at the centre of our human way of knowing. It sits at the intersection of the particulars and the universals, of the non-/post-conceptual and the conceptual. Prior to *logos*, it provides the content of *logos* and the dianoetic *aretai*. Taking this opening understanding, then, of *noûs* as 'direct perception of the *logos*,' I will examine how Heidegger understands and expands on it as *vernehmen*.

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7 Aristotle 1143a35-1143b10.
8 As Schopenhauer (1891, p. 114) puts it: "To conceive is to think less than we perceive."
9 Aristotle 1196b25-30. Cf. *De Anima*, 427b27.
10 Aristotle, *De Anima*, 429a30-429b10.
11 Aristotle 1144b10. Although presumably in the latter, it is present to at least some degree. In my arguments below, I will hold that *noûs* first arises at a very young age, with the first stirrings of language.
12 Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 17a15-6, 17a38-17b15.

5.2 – *From* noûs *to* vernehmen

in which I discuss Heidegger's identification of* noûs *with* vernehmen*, the apprehension of 'something* as *something.'

I argued in Chapter Three that the capacity to take entities hermeneutically-as ready-to-hand is a capacity we share with non-human animals, and that Heidegger's phenomenology on this point can be useful in understanding our connection to those animals. Nevertheless, Heidegger, in several places, asserts that human beings are separated from other animals by "an abyss."[13] In Chapter Three, I argued that this 'abyss' is carved by our capacity to take something apophantically-*as something*. In this Section, I will argue that this capacity is conceptualised as the perceptual capacity *vernehmen* ('hearing' or 'apprehension') which Heidegger identified with *noûs*.[14] As mentioned above, Heidegger's thinking is ultimately concerned with the 'question of being,' and his discussion of *vernehmen* forms part of his larger ontological project of showing Dasein as the place where entities come to presence.[15] My aims in this Chapter are more modest, and my exploration of *vernehmen* here is principally concerned with developing concepts to deepen the account of the difference between humans and animals that I have put forward so far, concepts which I will then apply in the following Chapter to the interpretation of empirical studies.

In the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures, Heidegger argues that animals do not simply attach different meanings to entities that they perceive together with us, but that the content of our perception is qualitatively different. Human beings perceive things *as* actually *being* entities. It is, he says

> not a question of whether or how the animal takes what is given to it in a different way, but rather of whether the animal can apprehend [*vernehmen*] something *as* something, something *as* a being at all. If it cannot, then the animal is separated from man by an abyss.[16]

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13 Heidegger 1993, p. 230; Heidegger 1995, p. 264.

14 Heidegger uses *vernehmen* in a technical way. In ordinary German, the word means 'to hear' or 'a hearing' (being used both as a verb and a noun), although it is not really an everyday word and sounds rather old-fashioned. In translations of Heidegger, it is generally rendered 'apprehension' (e.g., Heidegger 1995), although Macquarrie & Robinson (Heidegger 1962) and Gray (Heidegger 1968) translate it as 'perception.' I generally leave it untranslated, although I will occasionally use 'apprehension.'

15 Cf. *supra*, pp. 3, 101.

16 Heidegger 1995, p. 264.

Vernehmen is highlighted as the capacity to take "something *as* something."[17] This is not to deny that other animals experience things hermeneutically-as solicitations within a very narrow context– recall the lizard, for which Heidegger argued the sunny rock must show up as invested with significance, but for which the 'rock' and the 'sun' could never be revealed *as such*, that is, as tokens belonging to a conceptual class.[18] Similarly, while a flower is obviously significant for a bee, it cannot encounter the stamens '*as* stamens,' nor as belonging to a plant to which also belong seeds, leaves, roots, and so forth.[19]

For Heidegger, animals merely 'behave' (*benehmen*) and are 'captivated' (*benommen*) within what he calls 'disinhibiting rings.'[20] By this, Heidegger is describing the animal's experience of an entity as what Gibson called an affordance that, within a given context, solicits a certain response.[21] The rings are 'disinhibited' in the context of the animal's 'drives' in its present environment. Thus a lizard, approaching the sunny rock in the cool of the morning, would have it show up as a solicitation in a way that it would not later when, sufficiently warm and feeling hungry, its ring is disinhibited by the sight of a caterpillar crawling nearby.

Heidegger uses the same word, *Benommenheit*, to describe Dasein's absorption in its ready-to-hand dealings.[22] When we are fully immersed in a task, such as fielding a cricket ball, we are drawn towards it not *as* a ball, but as an element of the overall task, that must be chased down, stopped, and thrown back as quickly as possible. In a similar, though more subtle way, towards the end of the drinks break we find that the bin draws us toward it, not *as* a *bin*, but as a place to throw our beer can. Even before we have completely finished our beer, if we pay attention, we may even be aware of an almost physical pull, where the bin holds itself open as this possibility, this next step in the 'activity' of our drinks break.[23]

As discussed in Chapter Three, our essential difference with animals is our capacity to step back and to take the bin or the ball as context-free, separately from any solicitation– that is, as an apophantic-'*this*.' Heidegger explicitly denies any such

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17 *Ibid*.
18 *Ibid*, p. 198.
19 *Ibid*, p. 193.
20 *Ibid*, p. 254.
21 Gibson 1979, pp. 127-9.
22 Heidegger 1962, p. 88.
23 An inability to resist the pull of such 'captivating' ready-to-hand objects is, I suspect, at the heart of obsessive-compulsive and other impulsive disorders, although this is not the place to expand on such thoughts.

reflective understanding to the 'captivated' animal.

> An animal can only behave [*sich... benehmen*] but can never apprehend [*vernehmen*] something as something– which is not to deny that the animal sees or even perceives. Yet in a fundamental sense the animal does not have perception [*Wahrnehmung*].[24]

Heidegger's claim here plays on the root *nehmen*, 'to take.' The animal can of course sense things, and can 'take' them (or, rather, be taken by them) as solicitations within its captivated ring of dealings. But since it cannot apprehend– *vernehmen*– them, or 'take' them *as something*, it does not really have Perception or *Wahrnehmung*– literally 'true-taking.' It has no perception *of objects*.

In Heidegger's thought, then, *vernehmen* has a connection to truth (and by extension, falsity). As we saw earlier, animals can misperceive– mis-take– one thing by responding to it as a solicitation for an inappropriate action, but they are not, strictly-speaking, in error since they are unable to take an objective stance on the truth of the matter. Truth and falsity (*aletheia* and *pseudesthai*) are, for Heidegger, intimately bound up with our understanding something through the *logos*– which is itself the product of this capacity to *vernehmen* something *as* something:

> At the basis of the *logos* there lies an *apprehending* [Vernehmen], *noesis, noûs*, an apprehending of something– or rather the *logos is*, in accordance with its essence, this apprehending of [something].[25]

Vernehmen is therefore identified with *noûs*, the direct, perceptual understanding that underpins the *logos*.[26] In *Being and Time*, *vernehmen* describes our awareness of the present-at-hand, arising as we step back from our 'fascination' (*Benommenheit*) with the ready-to-hand, withdrawing from involvement with an entity to "just tarrying alongside" it.[27] It is an abstracting power, in which we no longer take entities as part of an involved, flowing context, but as *eidei*, "purely in the *way they look*."[28] In an elaboration of the Aristotelian connection between *logos* and *noûs*, Heidegger argues that language is central to the act of *vernehmen*.

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[24] Heidegger 1995, p. 259. "Ein Tier kann sich nur benehmen, aber nie etwas als etwas vernehmen, wogegen nicht spricht, daß ein Tier sieht oder auch wahrnimmt. Im Grunde aber hat das Tier keine Wahrnehmung" (Heidegger 1983, p. 376).

[25] Heidegger 1995, p. 314.

[26] Cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 85.

[27] Heidegger 1962, p. 88.

[28] *Ibid*, Heidegger's emphasis.

> [*Vernehmen*] is consummated when one *addresses* [ansprechen] oneself to something as something and *discusses* [besprechen] it as such.[29]

Addressing and discussing– *ansprechen* and *besprechen*– share the root *sprechen*, 'to speak,' highlighting the sense in which *vernehmen* is an essentially linguistic form of perception. Keeping in mind that speech (*Rede*, *Sprache*), for Heidegger, has an existential significance beyond natural language, this passage offers a thought-provoking account of the emergence of a peculiarly human form of awareness. It is significant that the first clause of the sentence is reflexive: "one addresses oneself..."[30] One comes to know what one is aware of; one establishes a relationship. That is to say, in coming to know the thing *as a thing*, a separation is realised. Where the thing is, one is not. That is to say, the relationship established by *vernehmen* is experienced as essentially dualistic, holding between a subject and something present-at-hand.

This awareness– *noûs*– is of another kind than the involved, ready-to-hand dealings that characterise our reflexive activities. Rather than *using* the entity *for* something ('with-which,' 'in-order-to,' and so on), we hold back and 'speak-to' or address it, acknowledging it *as* a Thing that we dwell alongside within-the-world, autonomously, 'holding back' from manipulation.[31] Once it has been established as a Thing– an object– we can 'speak-of' or discuss it, taking what-we-have-come-to-know (that is, what-we-have-addressed) and moving it around, in the grammatical sense that to speak-of something is to place its signifier into new contexts, (which are themselves 'placed' in an overall temporal relationship to one another in a whole). A second stage of abstraction takes place, in that what is discussed is not the Thing, but the *logos* drawn from the Thing. This is only possible through the removal of the ready-to-hand context, or what I earlier referred to as *Naming*.[32]

Vernehmen, then, as a 'hearing', is a calling-out of something as a *this*, separating it from the totality of involvements.[33] *Vernehmen* freezes our experience of entities out

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29 *Ibid*, p. 89.

30 The verb *ansprechen* as Heidegger uses it in the German passage is not itself technically reflexive, but there is the same implication of a relationship, setting the object before oneself.

31 Heidegger 1962, p. 89.

32 *Supra*, p. 39ff.

33 *Vernehmen* can also be used in the sense of a judicial hearing, giving us the image here of an entity that has been called forth out of the context of involvements– placed before us 'in the dock,' as it were, and questioned. Heidegger (1962, p. 89) insists, however, that this calling out is not a case of a subject forming *representations* [Vorstellungen]. There is no mediation here; the experience is directly of the thing itself– a point he seems to share with McDowell's naïve realism, although I will

of the context of the circumspective dealings in which we saw through them to the goal of our task, and which in that context fluidly determined what they *are* to us. During coping, for example, the cricket ball is now a target of pursuit, now a missile to be thrown, and now irrelevant to our celebration of the run-out. But *vernehmen* is an act of "making [an entity] determinate (*bestimmen*)" as a Thing, which can be expressed in propositions which are "retained and preserved."[34] The *vernommen* ball, present-at-hand, is the same ball, whether we discuss it as being hit, fielded, or put away in a bag.

Heidegger discusses this point in *Being and Time* as he introduces presence-at-hand, making it clear that *noûs* is the faculty that gives us access to entities in the present-at-hand form in which we typically (that is, un-phenomenologically) think of them (as opposed to the 'hidden' yet primordial mode of readiness-to-hand that he discusses in the following chapter). In the context of that work, where he has not yet discussed the readiness-to-hand of equipment, Heidegger's point is to articulate that Western philosophy has typically taken our access to entities to be through *noein* or 'knowing.' Given what is to come in *Being and Time*, it may appear that Heidegger is setting up these concepts in order to reject them. Yet Division One's argument is only that we shouldn't take *noesis* and presence-at-hand as the basis of an ontology, not that they aren't phenomenologically real and important, as their centrality in Heidegger's later work shows.[35]

An important theme that begins at this early point of *Being and Time* and extends into his later work is Heidegger's emphasis on the role of language in giving us access both to entities as well as giving us access to them *as* (*being*) *entities*. As this Chapter progresses, we will see that what is essential here is not natural language, but the way in which our perception of entities is structured as the *logos*. We can cast a further light on this form of access via Heidegger's later thoughts on the matter.[36] Heidegger returns to many of the themes of *Being and Time* from another angle in his final lecture course, *What Is Called Thinking?* [37] In the second half, he spends a

note some important differences with this towards the end of this thesis, p. 254.

34 Heidegger 1962, p. 89.

35 Heidegger (1995, p. 177) criticises those who would emphasise Division One's focus on *techne* and equipment as the central point of his thinking, saying it "never occurred to me... to try and claim or prove... that the essence of man consists in the fact that he knows how to handle knives and forks or use the tram."

36 Indeed, thinkers such as Malpas (2012a, pp. 23-5) hold that Heidegger's early thought can only be fully understood through the light of his later thinking.

37 Heidegger 1968.

considerable amount of time arriving at a translation of Parmenides' sixth fragment: "*Chrei to legein te noein t'eon emmenai*."[38] Conventionally, this is translated as "one should both say and think that being is," but Heidegger believes that this reading obscures the essential point that Parmenides was thinking. Heidegger carefully examines each word, and once again equates *noein* with *vernehmen*, emphasising it as an active, interpretative faculty rather than a passive receptivity.[39] However, this time he pushes the translation further, finally satisfying himself with: "It is useful both to let-lie-before-us and so also to take-to-heart beings in [their] Being."[40]

Heidegger's re-thinking of *noein* as an intimate perceptual 'taking-to-heart' (*In-die-Acht-nehmen*) is particularly illuminating in the context of his earlier thinking of *vernehmen* as a conscious apprehending or perception.[41] We can read our example from *Being and Time* with Heidegger's later understanding in mind:

> Taking-to-heart is consummated when one *addresses* [ansprechen] oneself to something as something and *discusses* [besprechen] it as such.

'To know' or 'to apprehend' has become a 'taking-to-heart.' We now find even more strongly the emphasis on establishing a relationship, a thought that becomes richer when we consider that *Acht* literally translates as 'heed' or 'attention.' I speak-to (*an-spreche*) the thing as something separate from me, and yet take it into myself, incorporating it even while it retains its own unity. What is taken-to-heart is taken *as* something, as the object of my attention. It is mine, but it is not me. It is mine in the sense that, when I perceive something in this very conscious way– a cricket ball, for example– I establish something unique with respect to it. In the moment of apprehension, I am aware of it in a particularly personal way. While I of course maintain a background, circumspective awareness of the context I am in and of other things happening around, there is something unique about the ball as the object of my focus– I have taken it to heart. If I then turn to throw the ball, my awareness of it changes. I still perceive it, in that I am still aware of it, but not *as a ball*. My *vernommen* apprehension forms a new relationship with something else– with my target, perhaps– while the ball becomes circumspectively ready-to-hand.

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38 *Ibid*, pp. 182-228.

39 *Ibid*, p. 203; cf. Heidegger 2002, p. 205.

40 Heidegger 1968, p. 223; "brauchet es das Vorliegenlassen und so das In-die-Acht-nehmen auch Seiendes [im] Seiend" (Heidegger 2002, p. 227).

41 Heidegger 1968, pp. 203, 207, 209-14. Note the connection between the 'taking' (*nehmen*) in *vernehmen* and *In-die-Acht-nehmen*.

Taking-to-heart is intimate in the sense that I cannot be conscious of many things in this way simultaneously. Like a spotlight, this conscious perception lights upon one thing and then another–passing swiftly, to be sure, but nonetheless only taking-to-heart one single thing at each discreet moment. The 'single thing' need not correspond to an indivisible primitive; there is no metaphysical claim here. Rather, it refers to the *experience* of a unity *as such*. For example, I can now apprehend this 'row of books' or I can apprehend 'this red book,' and back and forth, but only consecutively, never simultaneously *as* '*this*.'[42]

In this Chapter so far, I have been detailing Heidegger's understanding of *noûs* as *vernehmen*, a taking-to-heart that signifies an exclusively human perception of an object *as* present-at-hand, and immediately understood as the *logos*. In the next Section connect *noûs/vernehmen* to my earlier discussion of rationality, in order to demonstrate its significance to the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, and the picture of the human that we are drawing from our exploration of it.

5.3 – Noûs *and* logos

***in which I connect* noûs *to the rational faculty discussed in earlier Chapters, and examine its relation to truth, falsity, and the* logos.**

In this final Section, I will argue that *noûs*, as the ground of the *logos*, identifies what McDowell calls the faculty of reason that allows us to 'have' the *logos* as *zoa logon echonta*– it is what makes us 'rational animals.' I will explore the parallels in McDowell and Heidegger's work, as discussed so far, to suggest that, through the development of *noûs* in world-formation, we come to experience entities within a 'space' that is both constructed by *noûs* and experienced bodily.

In Chapter Three, I argued that McDowell's understanding of human beings as rational animals is grounded not in our ability to give reasons (*Gründe*) for our actions, but in our possession of the faculty of rationality, *Vernunft*, the ability to 'take' something *as* an apophantic-'*this*.' '*Vernunft*' is etymologically descended from '*vernehmen*,' emphasising its perceptual essence. [43] Heidegger, too, traces the connection between *noûs* and *logos* to explain how *logos*– properly the content of this

[42] However, the fact that we experience both the 'book' and the 'row of books' *as* united entities does have metaphysical implications, which I will touch upon at the end of this thesis.

[43] See Inwood 1992, p. 242.

perception– came to be identified with the faculty of rational perception itself.

> In accordance with its inner possibility, *logos* is grounded in *noûs*, *ratio* in Latin, which is why this comes to be equated with *logos*, because the latter is *noûs*.[44]

McDowell's emphasis on (in my terms) rationality as *Vernunft* therefore needs to be taken as a concern not just with the *logos* but with the particular capacity that gives rise to it– namely, *noûs*– which is why McDowell states that his invocation of rationality must be understood "in the sense that is in play in the traditional separation of mature human beings, as rational animals, from the rest of the animal kingdom."[45]

As I showed in Chapter Three, Dreyfus makes much of the enactment of this capacity during the 'breakdown' of coping, which he discusses as the source of our apophantic awareness of the present-at-hand.[46] Through 'assertion,' which Heidegger emphasises need not be explicit speech, we step back from our involved use of ready-to-hand equipment, as its as-structure is 'modified' from the hermeneutic to the apophantic.[47] In the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, assertion is identified with *kateigoria*.

> *Kateigoria*... designates those moments which apply to the *logos* in a particular way, moments which the *logos* necessarily asserts as the *kateigoriai* which accompany it, which accompany assertion and have their definite possibilities.[48]

Kateigoria is literally an 'accusation' (from *kateigoros*, 'accuser'). Assertion, therefore, is both the calling-out of something as a '*this*,' and the understanding of the '*this*' as belonging to a conceptual class or category. The entity is declared to be of a type, as understood from the particular angle of the accuser, and defined as such. Yet the capacity to do this presupposes *noûs*, as the ability to take an entity *as such*. Assertion– the pointing-out of the object as *logos*– is not the source of this understanding, but marks its enactment. While the breakdown of coping is perhaps the most dramatic prompt of this enactment, it is not a necessary condition of it. Our very act of perceiving (*vernehmen*) with *noûs is* this transition. *Logos*– language in the broadest sense of *Rede* and *Sprache*– is only possible for creatures who have this

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44 Heidegger 1995, p. 314.
45 McDowell 2007a, p. 338.
46 Cf. Dreyfus 1991, pp. 196-8.
47 Heidegger 1962, p. 201.
48 Heidegger 1995, p. 289. Recall also (*supra*, p. 34) that McDowell insists that all conceptual– that is, apophantic– experience must be understood as part of a 'categorial' unity.

capacity. As Heidegger puts it, "all *logos* can only point out… whatever *is already pre-logically manifest*."[49]

'Manifestness' (*Offenbarkeit*) is how Heidegger describes the entities to which Dasein has access, in contrast to the experience of animals, who merely have an 'openness' (*Offenheit*) to entities, to being 'taken' by them.[50] The animal's 'mere openness' is tied to its being 'poor-in-world.' It describes the access it has to the entities which break through its 'disinhibiting ring,' its 'openness to being captivated' by the entities that 'show up' as relevant to it but not *as entities*.[51] Manifestness, on the other hand, is tied to 'world,' in the full sense in which Dasein is 'world-forming.'[52] That Dasein already exists as world-forming means that entities are already available for it as being potentially manifest.[53] That is to say, Dasein's relation to the world– through *noûs*– means that Dasein *sees* the world in terms of entities. Being able to 'break' out of our captivated coping is a possibility that is always available to us, and so we are never truly captivated in the sense of a world-poor animal. *Noûs*, as the possibility of seeing 'as,' is therefore the ground of the manifestness of entities as they become available as something that can be expressed as the *logos*, for

> the [apophantic] 'as' expresses the fact that beings in general have become manifest in their being, that that distinction has occurred… We never first have 'something' and then 'something more' and then the possibility of taking something *as* something, but the complete reverse: something first gives itself to us only when we are already moving within projection, within the 'as'.[54]

The key point here is that, possessing the faculty of *noûs* and being 'world-forming,' Dasein perceives the world as such that it always has the potential to express entities as the *logos apophantikos*. As Malpas puts it, world-formation "has its ground in the original opening-up of the world as a whole that enables the accessibility to things in order that they can be grasped as thus and so, and in order that statement and assertion about them can be possible."[55] This is rooted in *noûs* or *vernehmen*, because for Heidegger,

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49 Heidegger 1995, p. 346, Heidegger's emphasis.
50 *Ibid*, pp. 333, 342-3.
51 Heidegger 1995, pp. 269-70.
52 *Ibid*, pp. 279-80.
53 *Ibid*, p. 341.
54 *Ibid*, p. 365.
55 Malpas 2012b, pp. 327-8.

> Apprehending [*vernehmen*] is intrinsically *a taking together that takes apart*. As such it is the essential ground of the possibility of revealing or concealing pertaining to the *logos*, i.e., the *logos apophantikos*.[56]

'Revealing and concealing' here refer to truth and falsity (*aletheia* and *pseudesthai*), which are therefore asserted to be grounded in *vernehmen*.[57]

'World' therefore signifies an open space in which we experience the entities within it with *vernehmen as* entities, expressible as *logos* which is either true or false. We experience something– the 'red book,' or the 'row of books'– as a unity, a '*this*' about which we can make statements. *Vernehmen* is therefore bound up with language, yet, as Malpas stresses, the capacity for *vernehmen* is the prior possibility of experiencing the 'world,' not something that is brought about by language.

> [T]he implication of language in world-formation should not be taken to mean that world formation is brought about *by* language, any more than world-formation is simply brought about by human beings... Indeed, the human only appears *as* human and language *as* language in and through the forming of world... [World-formation] has its ground in the original opening-up of the world as a whole that enables the accessibility to things.[58]

This emphasis on *noûs* giving an 'always-already' *potential* to articulate something apophantically begins to quite strongly resemble McDowell's argument, seen earlier, that

> if an experience is world-disclosing, which implies that it is categorically unified, *all* its content is present in a *form* in which... it is suitable to constitute contents of conceptual capacities."[59]

Heidegger and McDowell are therefore united in holding that the possession of *noûs*– *Vernunft* rationality– means that human beings bring to every experience the possibility of taking entities *as* entities. Their subtle difference, as I argued in Chapters

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[56] Heidegger 1995, p. 316, Heidegger's emphasis. Cf. *Being and Time* (Heidegger 1962, p. 269): "The truth of *aisthesis* and of the seeing of 'ideas' is the primordial kind of uncovering. And only because *noesis* primarily uncovers, can the *logos* as *dianoein* also have uncovering as its function." This point will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

[57] Cf. Heidegger 1995, pp. 314-5: "the *prior apprehending of something as something in forming a unity*, is the *condition of the possibility* of *truth* and *falsity* of the *logos*" (Heidegger's emphasis).

[58] Malpas 2012b, p. 327.

[59] McDowell 2007a, p. 347.

One and Three, is that in focusing on the *potential* for articulation– which in this Chapter I have argued signifies the prior presence of *noûs* as making an entity's manifestness possible– McDowell overlooks the translation of content that occurs when the potential for assertion or the act of apprehension is enacted. Nonetheless, considering that *noûs* is a capacity that overlaps with our practical modes of cognition, and that *noesis* is a direct perception of the *logos* without the need for an actual breakdown of coping, there is a sense in which our conceptual understanding– of the apophantic *as something– is*, for the most part, pervasive, although this is not the argument McDowell makes. Rather, he has essentially argued that *noûs* is the primary and perhaps the only way we relate to the world.

The most promising overlap of McDowell's and Heidegger's Aristotelian thought lies in their agreement that it is through the *logos* that we have access to truth, and that this is bound up with the possibility of falsity.[60] As such, there is something of a 'gap' or 'room for error' involved between noetic perception and the *logos* that expresses it. As Dretske notes, there is space to make a 'conceptual' error without implying a corresponding 'perceptual' one.[61] A person fooled by a fake watch, for example, would not be making a perceptual error. “Good fakes,” he says, “are supposed to cause the same kinds of experiences as the originals.”[62] The conceptual error is only possible because we inhabit a space of reasons in which it is meaningful to say 'that “Rolex” is a knock-off.' In Heidegger's terms, “the *logos apophantikos* as assertion is possible only where there is freedom.”[63]

Heidegger calls this freedom *Spielraum*, literally 'play-space,' the “leeway within which those beings that assertion is to be about are themselves manifest.”[64] Malpas points out that there is a link here– albeit an unintentional one– with the 'space of reasons' that McDowell invokes.[65] The shared image of this spatial language is that the world-formation (*Weltbilden*) or the *Bildung* that creates second-nature produces a space in which we perceive entities as filtered through, though not necessarily mediated by, concepts– that is to say, as either conceptual or post-conceptual. Just as non-rational animals perceive first-natural environmental spaces through pure sense

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60 McDowell's endorsement of a 'disjunctive' theory of perception has its roots in this understanding. See McDowell 1998b, pp. 386-7.
61 Dretske 1995, p. 67.
62 *Ibid*.
63 Heidegger 1995, p. 339.
64 *Ibid*.
65 Malpas 2012b, p. 339, n. 32.

perception (*aisthesis*), so rational animals apprehend second-natural 'worldly' spaces with the *vernehmen*-perception of *noûs*. While the 'world' may in some sense be 'constructed'– or better, dependent on our possession of *noûs* for the manifestness of entities– it is lived in such a way that we inhabit it as we do a space– or more precisely, it *is* the space we live.

Conclusions

In the previous Chapter, I argued that our development of second nature results in our navigation of our 'worlds' with post-conceptual coping, and through this capacity– exemplified by *phronesis*– we experience even conceptually-derived entities hermeneutically-*as* solicitations. In this Chapter, I have argued that the acquisition of second nature amounts to the development of *noûs*, the cognitive-perceptual faculty of *vernehmen* through which we directly see entities and concepts apophantically *as* entities. We therefore discover two modes of experiencing content within second nature. I have suggested that both of these modes are experienced in a spatial sense– that is to say, as immersive experiences that are known primarily in a perceptual sense in spite of being arrived at through the exclusively human cognitive faculty of *noûs*.

By examining how Heidegger expanded on Aristotle's thinking by discussing *noûs* and *noesis* as *vernehmen*, apprehension, I highlighted first and foremost that *noûs* is experienced as a form of *perception*. This form of perception is distinctively different to the perception I have attributed to animals, which is closer to our own circumspective coping and background awareness. With *vernehmen*, we perceive entities *as* entities, as unities with their properties. Such entities are experienced as the objects of our *attention*. We experience them intimately, 'taking them to heart' as a single entity, detached from practical or metaphysical interpretations. With *vernehmen*, we focus now on 'the red book,' now on 'the pile of books,' now 'the red books in the pile,' and now 'the cluttered desk.' Noetic perception gives us the ability to perceive deeper into and beyond the entity we perceive; it allows us to abstract. For this reason, Heidegger argues that only *vernehmen*, unlike animal perception, should really be considered Perception– *Wahrnehmung*, 'taking as true.'

Understanding *noûs* as the direct perception of things in a conceptual aspect– as the *logos*– echoes McDowell's claim that conceptual capacities are pervasive in mature human beings. Yet I argued in Part One that the post-conceptual experience of things during smooth coping, exemplified by *phronesis*, is the *source* of concepts

through the reflective transition that *noûs* enacts. This picture is complicated when we observe that, in a sense, *noûs* is 'always operative.' What we begin to see is that these intentional modes are not exclusive or sequential, but parallel, and feed back into one another, to build the world of human experience. Through the development of *noûs* and second nature, we enter a space where we point out things *as* things, and can hence hold them to be true. In Chapter Seven, I will discuss how this ability to take something as true by abstracting it also brings with it the ability to take things as false, since as our apprehension separates and combines noetic perceptions, it creates the possibility to take things as they are not. However, I shall leave aside such implications for the present, and turn my attention in the next Chapter towards grounding the faculty of *noûs*, and its intimate connection with language, in empirical studies.

Chapter Six
The Linguistic Capacity

In the previous Chapter, I gave an account of the conceptual links between *noûs* and *logos*– between *vernehmen* and *Sprache*– in Aristotle and Heidegger's thought and argued for an essential dependence of language on *vernommen* perception, suggesting that the *logos* is not the ability to communicate, but rather that which is communicated– that is to say, it is the form of the entity revealed through *vernehmen*, which, as the ability to take something apophantically-*as* something, is the very pre-condition of natural language. I argued that Heidegger's *vernehmen*, following Aristotle's *noûs*, identifies an exclusively human mode of cognition that perceives entities in the world *as* entities. As such, it is equivalent to what McDowell describes as the rationality we develop with 'second nature,' an equivalence which is strengthened through an emphasis by all three thinkers on the interconnection of this faculty with *logos* or language. It may be objected, however, that having done no more than that, then as elegant as these accounts might appear, they tell us little about human beings as we actually are. In this Chapter, then, I will argue that Heidegger's description gives us concepts that can be usefully applied to investigations of the development and functioning of the mind, by drawing upon empirical evidence to show that it is the appearance of language in human beings– and its absence in other animals– that marks the very distinctive way in which we perceive and inhabit our 'world.'

I will do this in two ways. In the first Section, I directly compare humans with animals to argue that the relevant phenomenon revealed by human language is the noetic perception argued for in the previous Chapter– it is this that makes us the *zoon logon echon* in contrast to other animals. I show that, while animals certainly communicate in elaborate ways, such communication remains on the level of purely ready-to-hand and does not involve the *logos*. That is to say, the signals animals use are not representations of present-at-hand entities, but are themselves tools used circumspectively as part of an ongoing task. I will argue that this holds even for the most human-like animals, as demonstrated in the curious fact that apes never point. Elaborating on a series of studies by Tomasello and his colleagues, I argue that this fact demonstrates that chimps have no awareness of objects *as* objects. This is in sharp contrast to human infants, who begin spontaneously pointing as they start to acquire language. Pointing, therefore, serves as an initial clue of a fundamentally different way

of taking the world.

In the second Section, I expand on this by comparing the insight into pointing with what Merleau-Ponty discussed as the 'pointing' and 'grasping' modes of cognition. Building on Goldstein's account of 'the Schneider Case' of brain-damage-induced visual agnosia, Merleau-Ponty argues for two modes of intentional directedness which are in principle separable. I relate these modes to my earlier discussion, arguing that the 'grasping' mode is operative in ready-to-hand coping and offers an insight into animal activity. The impairment of Schneider's pointing capacity, I will argue, demonstrates a deficiency in his faculty of *noûs*, and will hence clarify both what human coping shares with other animals, and how *noûs* makes us different from them.

6.1.1 – *Animal Language*

in which I argue that animals lack language in a true sense– insofar as, lacking grammar, they do not articulate the* logos– *and hold that their communication is better understood as a form of coping with ready-to-hand equipment.

I have so far argued that the 'abyss' Heidegger identified between humans and animals is carved by *noûs* and the ability to take entities *as* entities. As *noûs* is one of several cognitive capacities that humans have, we can therefore maintain the presence of the abyss even while arguing that we share many capacities with other animals. This is precisely the picture we find in Merleau-Ponty's *Structure of Behaviour*, which I briefly noted in Part One. [1] Merleau-Ponty identifies three distinct forms of behaviour– the 'syncretic,' the 'amovable,' and the 'symbolic'– which broadly correspond to the three categories of 'lower animals,' 'higher animals,' and 'Dasein' that I articulated earlier.[2] 'Syncretic' forms of behaviour are reflexive responses to "certain complexes of very special stimuli," such as a frog's flicking its tongue at moving black specks, while 'symbolic' forms involve a conceptual abstraction from the immediate experience.[3] 'Amovable' forms of behaviour, in the middle, describe a situation-specific flexible responsiveness comprised of the agent's response to signals which are "founded on structures which are relatively independent of the materials in

[1] Merleau-Ponty 1963, pp. 104-127; *supra*, p. 51, n. 127.
[2] Merleau-Ponty 1963, p. 103-4. As mentioned earlier (p. 24, n. 51), 'higher' and 'lower' here do not imply any sense of hierarchy or teleology.
[3] Merleau-Ponty 1963, p. 104.

which they are realised."[4] They are, as such, not prescribed responses, but responses that the agent "selects" from a range of solicitations that are open to it.[5] 'Amovable' forms therefore describe what we experience as "pre-conceptual" coping, a term Taylor uses to cover both what I have called non-conceptual and post-conceptual, arguing that we must necessarily extend it to animals as a midway point between rational decision-making and inanimate-causal reactions.[6]

While Merleau-Ponty cautions that the forms of behaviour are shared within and across groups of animals and hence do not correspond to particular classes of animals, he nevertheless says that "animals can be distributed along this scale according to the type of behaviour which is most typical of them."[7] Significantly, he holds that symbolic forms of behaviour are only found in human beings. I would also argue that it is unlikely that invertebrates at least, and possibly some vertebrates, ever display amovable forms, and indeed, all of Merleau-Ponty's examples of the amovable are drawn from 'higher' animals such as birds, dogs, and chimps. His caution, then, is rather against supposing that humans embody *only* symbolic forms, but that we also demonstrate amovable and even instinctive, syncretic forms of behaviour. Where his account is most significant for us is in the recognition of these diverse modes of behaviour and their asymmetric overlapping, where 'higher' animals share forms with 'lower' but not vice versa.

Thus Merleau-Ponty argues that our own amovable behaviour has parallels with that of other animals. This is most significant to our investigation insofar as it governs our experience of entities. If we use a water bottle 'amovably' now to drink from, and now as a club to shoo away a wasp, our pre-conceptual experience of the bottle is as of two different entities. The very way we approach it, grasp it, and the whole context of possibilities that are solicited from and through it are completely different in each context. It is only through reflection– through the symbolic form, or the enactment of *noûs*– that we are able to 'unite' these different perspectives into a single experience. Thus, Merleau-Ponty argues, chimps, lacking the symbolic form of behaviour, can only experience objects in the context of the particular task they are engaged in (and hence as ready-to-hand).[8] For this reason, even a chimp's creative tool-use tends to

[4] *Ibid*, p. 105.
[5] Backhaus 2009, p. 17.
[6] Taylor 2005, p. 34. The 'pre-' in 'pre-conceptual' therefore signifies the opposition to conceptuality that is shared by non- and post-conceptuality, and hence is not here the opposite of the 'post-' in 'post-conceptual.'
[7] Merleau-Ponty 1963, p. 104.
[8] *Ibid*, pp. 113-4.

be *ad hoc*, for they do not first envision the possibilities a piece of equipment could afford several steps ahead.[9] Even when a chimp quite cleverly builds a structure from boxes to get an out-of-reach banana, their constructions tend to be quite unstable, built with the objects that come sequentially to hand rather than with methodical forethought. The boxes– both during construction and as a finished product– are utilised as an extension of the chimp's own body– and indeed, Merleau-Ponty claims that the chimp's success relies far more on their own refined sense of balance than their skill at engineering.[10] Abstract thought is not possible for an animal 'captivated' in the moment; something *is* what it is only within the context of the present activity, be it sitting or trying to reach food. Hence, as we saw in a previously quoted passage, Merleau-Ponty holds that:

> The box-as-seat and the box-as-instrument are two distinct and alternative objects in the behaviour of the chimpanzee and not two *aspects* of an identical thing. In other words, the animal cannot at each moment adopt a point of view with regard to objects which is chosen at its discretion; rather the object appears clothed with a 'vector,' invested with a 'functional value' which depends on the effective composition of the field.[11]

It is only through symbolic behaviour that abstract relations can be drawn from multiple perspectives and experiences. “Here behaviour no longer *has* only one signification,” Merleau-Ponty writes, “it *is* itself signification.”[12] Backhaus argues that the “thing-structure” of objects– *as* things, *as* objects– only emerges at the level of symbolic forms.[13] The symbolic form, therefore, arises through what Heidegger called having a 'world' in Dasein's richer sense, and through our capacity to take an entity *as* an entity. That is, while a chimp might, for example, come across a cup and be able to use it as a drinking vessel or as a nut-cracker, it could not take it (conceptually) *as* a

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[9] Cf. Tulving's (2005, p. 9) discussion of the 'mental time travel' associated with episodic memory, which he argues also applies in the future direction, giving us the ability to envision possible futures, an ability which he also denies to non-human animals.

[10] Merleau-Ponty 1963, p. 116. Since Merleau-Ponty's time, much more work has been done documenting tool use in non-human animals, both primates and non-primates (see e.g., Seed & Byrne 2010, for review). Such studies indicate that many animals are capable of sophisticated problem-solving, including the careful choice and refinement of tools. However, in all such examples, the animals do not appear to plan abstractly, but rather prepare their tools sequentially– with 'insight' rather than 'foresight' (*ibid*, pp. R1035-6)– remaining, as Heidegger might say, captivated within a particular task rather than showing an awareness of the task as a whole or the tools as isolable elements of that task.

[11] Merleau-Ponty 1963, p. 116.

[12] *Ibid*, p. 122.

[13] Backhaus 2009, p. 17.

cup, devoid of any practical context, as an isolated, abstract object, with features or properties like hardness, blue-ness, and so on, that could likewise be abstracted from the momentary action-context.

None of this denies the richness of animal experience. We need only think of a dog's sensitive nose, the additional cone-cell in a pigeon's eye, or the magnetically-tuned navigational capacities of tuna to realise that animals are capable of distinguishing phenomena well beyond the range of humans. Yet the point remains that these animals cannot experience the phenomena *as* phenomena, as disconnected from the task they are involved in. They remain "captivated" within their ready-to-hand dealings.[14] The 'abyss' between humans and non-human animals, therefore, is carved by animals' lack of *noûs*, their inability to take objects *as* present-at-hand. That is, there is a *qualitative* difference between animal experience and human experience.

In the previous Chapter, I noted the link between *vernehmen* and language. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty holds that symbolic forms of behaviour are tied intimately to language, unlike animal behaviour in which "signs always remain signals and never become symbols."[15] In what follows, I will explore the differences between human and animal communication to argue that the development of language– specifically, grammatical language– demonstrates the arising of noetic understanding. I emphasise *grammatical* language because there should be no doubt that animals communicate, and often communicate very precise information in elaborate ways, as the well-known 'waggle dance' of bees attests. Yet such communication can only be considered 'language' in a very limited and metaphorical sense. As Collins says, there is an important distinction between information 'transformation' and linguistic 'translation.'[16] Bees *transform* information about the location of flowers and the position of the sun into their dance, which other bees then transform into the behaviour of seeking nectar. Language-using humans, on the other hand, *translate* information into language, which requires an active interpretation by both the speaker and the hearer in context– there are no set meanings. The obvious advantage of this is the possibility of abstracting linguistic items from the immediate context. But as such, the translational nature of language means that something is often lost in moving from one medium to another, unlike animal communication, which in a sense has its meaning pre-determined.[17] The English word 'hawk,' for example, can

[14] Heidegger 1995, p. 239.
[15] Merleau-Ponty 1963, p. 120.
[16] Collins 2009, p. 77.
[17] *Ibid*.

mean many things depending on the context in which it is spoken and interpreted, unlike the vervet monkey's signal, which only ever means 'there's a hawk: hide!'

The relative lack of ambiguity in animals' communication stems from the fact that, as Millikan points out, in animal communication the imperative and the indicative functions of a signal are bound together.[18] A bird's cry does not just indicate the presence of a cat; it says 'fly away!' The same holds even for more specific signs. Vervet monkeys, for example, are well-known for having a 'vocabulary' of distinctive cries for different types of predators.[19] The cry signalling 'leopard' drives them to climb a tree to safety. A cry of 'snake' leads them to scan the ground. Yet it must be emphasised that the signal and the action are inextricable for the monkeys. A cry of 'hawk' always means both that a hawk is in sight, and to take cover in the appropriate way. The monkey cannot communicate a hawk '*as* such.' That is, it cannot communicate a 'hawk' without the perceived presence of a hawk, nor without a corresponding imperative instruction.[20]

Pinker has argued that the same thing holds even for those apes that have ostensibly been taught sign language.[21] He pulls apart many well-known attempts to teach chimps language, and shows that, while chimps have been taught to use a vocabulary of signs in their interactions with their handlers, such sign use remains a long way from human, grammatical language. As with wild vervet monkeys, the signs for objects remain entangled with a related action. As Pinker notes, "virtually all their signs are demands for something they want, usually food or tickling."[22] Their signs are also not used with any kind of consistent structure. "*Juice* can mean 'juice,' 'where juice is usually kept,' or 'Take me to where the juice is kept'."[23]

Rather than thinking of these apes as using language, it makes more sense to think of them using the signs as *tools*. In Heidegger's terms, the signs are something ready-to-

[18] Millikan 1993, pp. 98-9.
[19] Seyfarth *et al*. 1980, p. 1070.
[20] Of course, the monkey might *mis*perceive, and utter an 'eagle' cry when there is no eagle around. Yet even this mistaken communication is context-dependent. The monkey perceives incorrectly, yet acts correctly on that basis, and the point remains that the monkey is incapable of experiencing the eagle (or pseudo-eagle) in a context-free way. Similarly, birds frequently sound alarm calls in the absence of a real threat. Mother Nature's cautiousness leaves a lot of room for error, although 'error' is perhaps too strong a word in these cases. Cf. *supra*, p. 94.
[21] Pinker 1994, p. 333-42.
[22] *Ibid*, p. 340.
[23] *Ibid*.

hand that the apes have learned to apply towards a goal (generally, getting food).[24] It is also worth pointing out that the learning process for sign-using chimps involved years of intensive training, in a task that essentially involved learning behavioural responses to get a reward– a long way from the natural and spontaneous language production of infants. Possibly the most astounding feature of infant language acquisition is that grammar is operative almost from the beginning.[25] Speakers as young as two have been shown to have a clear understanding of the effect of grammatical organisation on meaning.[26] In chimps, however, learned forms such as 'kiss me' are not immediately transferred over to 'kiss the dog,' indicating that chimps tend to learn phrases as a whole rather than by building them out of ultimate particulars.[27] Such grammatical organisation is also distinctly lacking in chimp 'sentence' production; after years of training, one particularly adept ape, dubbed Nim Chimpsky, uttered as typical 'sentences':

> Nim eat Nim eat.
> Drink eat me Nim.
> Me banana you banana me you give.
> Banana me me me eat.[28]

Nim is clearly using his learned signs to articulate a world of significances. Yet his use of words to get a banana remains closer to his use of a stick to get termites than to a linguistic utterance. Heidegger would say that Nim has no experience of the banana *as* a banana, and I will now argue that this absence of any grammatical organisation to Nim's 'speech' is tied to his lack of the qualitatively different mode of experience belonging to humans.

6.1.2 – *The Point of Grammar*

in which I argue that the effect of grammar on perception can be shown by the fact that infants acquiring language spontaneously point declaratively at objects, unlike apes, which never do.

I have argued that, on the Heideggerian view, language, as *logos*, is grounded in a way of seeing the world *as* entities, through *noûs*. Work in developmental psychology

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[24] Cf. Heidegger (1962, p. 108) on the readiness-to-hand of signs.
[25] Laurence & Margolis 2001, pp. 233-238.
[26] Noble *et al*. 2011, pp. 975-6.
[27] Pinker 1994, p. 335. Cf. the 'taking together that takes apart' (*synthesis* and *diairesis*) that Heidegger (1995, p. 316) argues lies at the heart of *vernehmen*. This will be further expanded in the next Chapter.
[28] From Pinker 1994, p. 339.

suggests that this grammatical capacity indicates a new way of seeing and being with the entities in the world. I have already mentioned the vast gulf between ordinary two-year-old human utterances and the repetitive babblings of sign-using apes. Yet this point can be made even more clear by comparing pointing gestures in human infants and in chimpanzees, following developmental and comparative psychologist Michael Tomasello who, drawing on multiple previous studies, has convincingly demonstrated an empirical abyss between humans and chimps.[29]

The interesting thing about apes and pointing, says Tomasello, is that they never do it (with some rare exceptions that, I will show below, only serve to strengthen my argument). This is interesting because chimps are well-known for having excellent intersubjective awareness.[30] They can follow the gaze of conspecifics and often alter their behaviour accordingly,[31] with subordinate chimps, for example, avoiding food that they know a more dominant ape has seen hidden, yet going for it when they know the latter remains ignorant.[32] They also show an awareness of competitors' intentions, and attempt to conceal their actions when there is a possibility of being caught out.[33] They have a wide repertoire of gestures, indicating that they wish to play, or to nurse, groom, attack, appease, have sex, and so forth.[34] And yet the only accounts of apes pointing are among captive apes pointing for their human handlers; "there is not a single reliable observation, by any scientist anywhere, of one ape pointing for another."[35]

Human babies, on the other hand, begin pointing spontaneously at around twelve months of age– significantly and, I will argue, not coincidentally, together with the earliest stirrings of language acquisition.[36] Franco and Butterworth suggest that declarative pointing originates independently of imperative gestures like reaching,[37] while Tomasello also notes that human infant pointing has two separate functions, what he calls the 'declarative' and 'imperative,' which arise at around the same time, although

[29] Tomasello 2006.
[30] *Ibid*, p. 508; see Call & Tomasello 2008 for review.
[31] Tomasello *et al*. 1998, pp. 1067-8; Povinelli & Eddy 1996, pp. 133-4.
[32] Hare *et al.* 2001, p. 144.
[33] Melis *et al.* 2006, p. 160.
[34] Goodall 1968, pp. 313-374; Tomasello *et al.* 1994, pp. 137-8, 140-1, 146.
[35] Tomasello 2006, p. 507.
[36] Butterworth & Morrissette 1996, pp. 228-9.
[37] Franco & Butterworth 1996, p. 330.

they are used to express quite different meanings.[38] These functions map onto the 'indicative' and 'imperative' representations discussed above, with imperative pointing giving a request or command for something, while a declarative point indicates that something *is*.[39] Infants point sometimes in an effort to be helpful (the child points to something that an adult is looking for but can't see), but often simply to point out an object to another person.

> The sole purpose of declarative pointing seems to be to draw another's attention to a shared external entity... This interpretation is supported by the fact that infants at this age also regularly hold up objects to show them to others, seeming wanting [*sic*] nothing from the adult but a sharing of experience (and emotion).[40]

On the other hand, "[a]lthough some apes, especially those with extensive human contact, sometimes point imperatively for humans... no apes point declaratively ever."[41]

Likewise, Merleau-Ponty argues that pointing reveals an awareness of ourselves now as subjects in an objectively-given world.

> The insertion of our factical situation as a particular case within the system of other possible situations begins as soon as we *designate* a point in space with our finger. For this pointing gesture, which animals do not understand, supposes that we are already installed in virtual space– at the end of the line prolonging our finger in a centrifugal and cultural space.[42]

Tomasello interprets these facts in a way that is consistent with our thesis so far. Apes seem to use pointing as a *tool*, something which past experience has shown works to get them what they want.[43] In human infants, however, there is an added dimension to their pointing, one tied to an intersubjective communicative experience. Tomasello shows this via a simple but clever experiment that reveals that infants tend not to be fully satisfied if their pointing gets them what they want by mistake. When the infant points to one of two items, the adult responds with "You want this [wrong object]? You can't have it but you can have this one [right object] instead." Despite having

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[38] Tomasello 2006, p. 510.
[39] Cf. Millikan 1993, pp. 98-9.
[40] Tomasello 2006, p. 511.
[41] *Ibid*, p. 510.
[42] Merleau-Ponty 1964, p. 7.
[43] Tomasello 2006, p. 511.

achieved their 'goal,' the infants nevertheless try to correct the adults.[44] Needless to say, nothing of this sort has ever been observed in apes.

What Tomasello's account shows is that, even at this pre- or proto-linguistic stage, human beings have an awareness that is very different from even our closest animal relatives. In the chimp's pointing, the indicative function is bound up with the imperative. Just as the vervet monkey's 'leopard' means both the presence of a leopard and the imperative to climb a tree, so the chimp's pointing at a grape means that it should be given the indicated grape. In the child's declarative pointing, however, we see a disconnection between the indicative and imperative functions. The infant points out the thing not in connection with any function or task, but simply as the thing itself, free from the context of the coping task. In Heidegger's terms, the child has "asserted" it as present-at-hand, *as* an object.[45]

The ability to *perceive* something with *noûs* is the pre-condition of being able both to point it out, and to attach a Name to it, and this perceptual element is as essential to language– in the strong, exclusively human sense of the *logos*– as any communicative function.

As Heidegger put it in a later seminar,

> The human being cannot comport himself in any way without language. Language is not only verbal articulation. *Communicatio* is only one possibility. *Sagen* [to say] originally meant *Zeigen* [to point/show].[46]

Taking language in this immersive, perceptual way clarifies just how fundamentally language forms (*bildet*) our 'worlds.' The role of language goes much deeper than the "repository of tradition" that McDowell gives it in his account of *Bildung*, the acquisition of which he then identifies with mindedness itself.[47] Zahavi notes that McDowell's picture, with its focus on a pre-established natural language, leaves an open problem over how 'mindless' infants go on to acquire it.[48] But by emphasising *Bildung* as the development of *noûs* rather than just the learning of culture, we get a fuller story of the naturalness of second nature, where natural language is not itself

[44] *Ibid*, p. 512.
[45] Cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 201.
[46] Heidegger 2001, p. 16.
[47] McDowell 1994, p. 126.
[48] Zahavi 2013, p. 326.

that space, but a sign that we are moving within it.

Chomsky has even suggested that the perceptual element of language evolved before the communicative and perhaps even uniquely in a single individual, approvingly citing Jacob who argues that "the role of language as a communication system between individuals would have come about only secondarily."[49] However, it is important to note that our earliest pointing gestures are essentially intersubjective– *we point for others*. We saw Tomasello emphasise the centrality of *sharing* experience and emotion in infant declarative pointing, and Franco and Butterworth argue that the pointing gesture's importance to language acquisition lies as much in its co-ordination of shared intentionality as in its referential aspect.[50] For this reason, Hinzen argues that all thinking occurs in a "deictic space" structured by the triangular relationship of the grammatical first-, second-, and third-persons.[51] In a similar way, discourse (*Rede*) for Heidegger is the way in which Dasein "maintains itself in some definite way of concernful Being-with-one-another,"[52] and the way in which 'being-with-[Others]' explicitly *shares* its co-situatedness (*Mitbefindlichkeit*).[53] These points warn against assigning a priority to linguistic perception over communication, since to do so is to separate the individual from our intersubjective immersion in a shared world. What it does establish, however, is that the presence of an ability to point out for others– whether with the index finger or with words– demonstrates the presence of a prior capacity to perceive entities *as* entities, and as a perception that can be shared. From a developmental point of view, however, as I will discuss in the next Chapter, it is likely that the noetic, perceptual capacity develops in parallel with the intersubjective, communicative dimension of language.

In this Section, I have argued that the development of language in humans is intertwined with the development of what Heidegger called *vernehmen* or *noûs*, the perception of something *as* something. I have argued this based on two central points. Firstly, while other animals certainly communicate, their signals are essentially used as tools that function in a ready-to-hand way. Their indicative function is bound together with their imperative function, and as such they are better understood as behavioural responses to a specific situation than as linguistic assertions. This is shown especially dramatically in the fact that chimps never point declaratively. This

[49] Chomsky 2005, p. 3; Jacob 1982, p. 59. Cf. Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch 2002, p. 1574.
[50] Tomasello 2006, p. 511; Franco & Butterworth 1996, p. 334.
[51] Hinzen 2014, p. 245
[52] Heidegger 1962, p. 204.
[53] *Ibid*, p. 205.

leads to my second point, which is that human infants spontaneously begin to point declaratively at the time they acquire language. I conclude from this that they have begun developing *noûs* at this point, meaning they are able to perceive and point out objects *as* objects, independent of any imperative or practical context. In the next Section, I will build on this argument by arguing that the infant's development of *noûs*, pointing and language does not replace their previous capacity, but adds to it.

6.2.1 – *The Schneider Case*

in which I argue that a case of visual agnosia is the result of the impairment of the patient's noetic capacities, and demonstrates the presence of two distinct modes of perception.

I have so far argued that pointing indicates a different way of perceiving the world– *noesis*– through which we understand something *as* something in a way that is unavailable to non-human animals. I have argued that the spontaneous development of declarative pointing in human infants suggests that they have moved beyond the pure motor-intentional coping that humans share with other animals. However, in arguing against McDowell's claim that this rational capacity is pervasive, I have implied that *noûs* is not a replacement of an earlier form of coping, but rather an addition (albeit one that fundamentally changes the functioning of the first-natural form). In this Section, I will continue this argument by drawing upon Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the 'Schneider case.' Through his phenomenological analysis of a case of severe agnosia, Merleau-Ponty argues that we have two ways of relating intentionally to the world, 'pointing' and 'grasping.' I will argue that the 'pointing' mode coincides with the noetic awareness of 'something *as* something.' This stands in contrast to grasping, which reveals a mode of 'captivated' coping.

Schneider was a German soldier who fought in the First World War. After a shrapnel wound to his brain, he developed what Merleau-Ponty called “psychic blindness” and what we would now call apperceptive visual agnosia.[54] He became a patient of psychologist Adhémar Gelb and neuropsychiatrist Kurt Goldstein, upon whose extensive discussions of his case history Merleau-Ponty draws.[55] Following his injury,

[54] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 105; Tonkonogy & Puente 2009, p. 25. I have principally referred to the recent (2012) Landes translation of *Phenomenology of Perception*, referring also to the original 1945 edition published by Librarie Gallimard. Somewhat frustratingly, the pagination between these editions, the most recent (post-2005) French editions, and the various editions of the earlier Smith translation, are all out of sync. The problems this entails have been rectified by David Morris' (2015) extremely useful “Concordance of Editions of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*,” which at the time of writing was freely available on his academia.edu webpage.

[55] Of the original discussions, see especially Gelb & Goldstein 1938 and Goldstein 1931.

Schneider became unable to point out 'abstract' objects, including on his own body. That is to say, he was unable either to indicate or to recognise objects or his own body parts outside of the context of a task. He was unable to describe the position of his limbs, nor to perform abstract movements with them.[56] However, although he was unable to point to his nose, he could take a handkerchief from his pocket and blow his nose without effort.[57] Similarly, while he was unable to say which part of his body had been touched, nor to distinguish between two points of contact on his skin, if he was bitten by a mosquito he would quickly and spontaneously reach for wherever he had been bitten.[58]

Schneider was unable to perceive or act in an abstract manner. He was, essentially, 'captivated' within a particular task, and could only perceive correctly within the context of a task.[59] Hence we find the strange paradox that Schneider could find his way unproblematically to Goldstein's house if he was going there on an errand, and yet could not recognise it if he was passing it in another context.[60] Similarly, while he was unable to recognise objects such as pens simply by looking at them, he was nevertheless able to continue his fairly intricate profession of wallet-making, successfully manipulating the scissors, needle, thread and leather, albeit at a slower although still acceptable rate than before his injury.[61]

Based on this account, Merleau-Ponty follows Goldstein in dividing human motor intentionality into two modes, 'grasping' (*Greifen*) and 'pointing' (*Zeigen*).[62] These respectively refer to what he describes as 'concrete' and 'abstract' movements. Concrete movements are those of the kind that Schneider remained capable of, actions which are directed towards 'objects' of a specific task, be it as simple as scratching an itch or as complex as sewing a wallet. Abstract movements, on the other hand, distance the object from the body; they isolate it as an object *as* such.

> Precisely like the act of naming, the act of pointing presupposes that the object, rather than being approached, grasped, and engulfed by the body, be maintained at a distance and sketch out an image in front of the patient... even this silent gesture is impossible if what it designates is not already ripped out of instantaneous and monadic existence

[56] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 105.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] *Ibid*, p. 105-6.
[59] *Ibid*, p. 137.
[60] *Ibid*, p. 136.
[61] *Ibid*, pp. 108, 105.
[62] *Ibid*, pp. 105-6.

> and treated as the representative of its previous appearances in me and of its simultaneous appearances in others; that is, unless it is subsumed under a category and promoted to the status of an idea.[63]

Schneider's disorder, then, can be understood as the loss of his *Zeigen* capacity. Without the ability to point, he is "no longer a subject facing an objective world… he can no longer take up the categorial attitude."[64]

Merleau-Ponty presents these statements as typical of the 'intellectualist' (rationalist) interpretation that he means to reject. However, as I will show below, his argument is principally against the intellectualist equation of subjectivity, agency– and by extension, *Zeigen*– with 'mind' and 'consciousness' more broadly. Merleau-Ponty accepts the understanding of *Zeigen* as a way of relating to entities under a categorial schema, but stresses that the loss of this capacity does not literally mean that Schneider– or the *Greifen* capacity more generally– is non-intentional or unconscious. His discussion of the Schneider case aims at describing human behaviour in more phenomenologically accurate terms than empiricism or intellectualism. For our discussion below, then, we must be careful to understand *Zeigen* and *Greifen* as Merleau-Ponty does, sharing his aim of preserving the distinction while guarding against empiricist or intellectualist interpretations.[65]

The empiricist interpretations of the *Zeigen*/*Greifen* distinction hold that it is either (or both) a distinction between the visual and tactile sensory faculties, or between intentional and reflexive actions.[66] In the case of the former, Merleau-Ponty argues that no such interpretation is indefeasible, and offers counter-examples that show that Schneider's and similar cases are not limitations of vision or other particular senses, but are the "*expressions* of a more fundamental disturbance."[67] In the case of the latter, as Kelly notes, it is impossibly reductionist to consider *Greifen* as reflexive and opposed to an intentional *Zeigen*.[68] While scratching a mosquito bite might arguably be a reflexive action, it is intentional in a way that a pure reflex such as the knee-jerk is not, and at any rate, as we have seen, *Greifen* actions also encompass complex intentional tasks. Thus, Merleau-Ponty holds, empiricist accounts cannot

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[63] *Ibid*, pp. 122-3.
[64] *Ibid*, p. 123.
[65] Keat 1991, p. 168.
[66] Merleau-Ponty 2012, pp. 116-122. Cf. Keat 1991, p. 173; Kelly 2000, p. 167.
[67] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 121.
[68] Kelly 2000, p. 167.

give us an accurate understanding of the *Zeigen*/*Greifen* distinction, nor of motor intentionality more broadly.

The intellectualist distinction between *Zeigen* and *Greifen* is not so easily dismissed, and indeed, Merleau-Ponty holds that it is "less false than it is abstract."[69] Keat argues that Merleau-Ponty's analysis aims to preserve the features of intellectualism that make it superior to empiricism, while refining its concepts to avoid an untenable dualism of body and mind.[70] Merleau-Ponty endorses the distinction between *Greifen* and *Zeigen* as ways of relating to the world. His problem is with the intellectualist interpretation of that distinction as one between physiology and psyche, between body and mind.[71] By trying to split our understanding of the subject as an *existence pour soi* against a body that is *en soi*, Merleau-Ponty says, we risk ultimately undermining the distinction between *Zeigen* and *Greifen* by either reducing both modes to a physiological reflex– for why should pointing not be considered physical if it utilises the same muscles and nerves as grasping?– or attributing them both to consciousness– since, as we have seen, grasping shares an intentionality with pointing that goes beyond the purely physiological.[72]

The solution, Merleau-Ponty argues, is to emphasise the *Zeigen*/*Greifen* distinction in order to re-conceive what it is to be a subject and an agent: "the two responses cease to merge if *Zeigen* and *Greifen* are considered as two different ways of relating to the object and two types of being in the world."[73]

> The distinction [between abstract and concrete movement, between *Zeigen* and *Greifen*] can only be maintained if there are *several ways for the body to be a body, and several ways for consciousness to be consciousness*.[74]

In what follows, then, I will explore the distinction between *Greifen* and *Zeigen* in the light of my thesis so far, to argue that the *Greifen* mode captures the form of awareness we enact through embodied smooth coping and that we share (to an extent) with other animals, while *Zeigen* refers to the enactment of *noûs*. I will argue first that *Greifen* corresponds to the mode of awareness employed in embodied coping. The key elements of this are that *Greifen* is only directed towards objects in the context of a

[69] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 126.
[70] Keat 1991, p. 168.
[71] *Ibid*, pp. 172-3.
[72] Merleau-Ponty 2012, pp. 124-5.
[73] *Ibid*, p. 124.
[74] *Ibid*, p. 125.

task, and that such tasks are *sequential*– that is, performed in a habitual way such that objects are only encountered as far as they are relevant to the task, and cannot be separated out in terms of their 'objective' or standalone properties.

The defining mark of *Greifen* behaviour– as with dealings with the ready-to-hand– is that it takes place within an action-context. As Romdenh-Romluc argues, the objects of our 'grasping' don't have "merely objective qualities" such as size and shape but '*verb*-al' solicitations like edible, kickable, and so on.[75] For Kelly, our understanding of the object-in-context "is dependent upon the intention *to grasp*" it, to use it rather than simply to point it out.[76] Put another way, we circumspectively see-through the object as the 'with-which' of a broader equipmental context, rather than as something isolated from that context.[77] Or to use an analogy, we might say that *Greifen* is like an understanding of a sentence as a whole, where *Zeigen* is an awareness of individual words.

Kelly argues this with support from more recent research into agnosics.[78] He discusses work by Goodale and his colleagues, who investigated a woman, DF, showing similar symptoms to Schneider. Following brain-damage due to carbon monoxide poisoning, she was unable to discriminate between the size, shape and orientation of visual objects.[79] She was furthermore unable to indicate the size of objects with a gesture of her thumb and forefinger. Nonetheless, when she was asked to grasp them, her thumb and forefinger were noted to be "systematically related to the width of the object."[80] Similarly, while DF was unable to state the orientation of a slot as either horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, she was consistently successful at posting a card through variously arranged slots.[81] Significantly, Goodale and his colleagues note that she "began to orient the card correctly even as her hand was being raised from the start position in this task."[82] Similarly,

> when asked to pick up a block placed at different orientations on the table surface in front of her, she oriented her hand appropriately very early in the reaching movement

[75] Romdenh-Romluc 2007, p. 45.
[76] Kelly 2000, p. 173.
[77] Heidegger 1962, pp. 98-9.
[78] Kelly 2000, p. 171.
[79] Goodale & Milner 1992, p. 22.
[80] Goodale *et al*. 1991, p. 155.
[81] *Ibid*.
[82] *Ibid*.

and grasped the object normally.[83]

Such observations, as Kelly also argues, strongly support Merleau-Ponty's claim that from "its very beginnings, the grasping movement is magically complete."[84]

Greifen therefore signifies a perception that takes place as part of a whole. I remarked earlier that our absorbed coping is comprised of actions that have a more-or-less defined sequence. For example, it is far more difficult to play a melody or rhythm from the middle– one might draw a blank, and yet on being given the first bar, the rest flows naturally.[85] Indeed, we might say– again analogously– that *Greifen* is a perception of the melody, where *Zeigen* sees the individual notes.[86] Through *Greifen*, we put into play our absorbed habits– as seen in Schneider's ability to scratch an itch, blow his nose, and even sew together wallets.

Further evidence for this is shown by Schneider's inability to *play*. Schneider is only able to mime movements such as a military salute or hammering a nail by "placing himself into the spirit of the actual situation."[87] If asked to pretend to hammer a nail, Schneider would raise both his right, hammering hand, and his left, nail-holding hand, and *actually* 'hammer' the invisible nail. That is, he was completely *unable* to raise only his right hand and pretend to hammer in a half-hearted or unrealistic manner. Essentially, the only way Schneider could play was to 'suspend disbelief' and fully 'get into character.' If the spell was broken, and his attention drawn to the fact that he was not actually saluting a superior, "all of his dexterity disappears."[88] This suggests that the *Greifen* mode extends beyond simply grasping, but describes the intentional state in which we approach habitual tasks, or the 'embodied skills' I discussed earlier. Schneider's over-realistic pretending stands in stark contrast to normal subjects who, when we play at an activity, tend to accentuate only the most significant elements of the movement.[89] Thus, when young children play at a task, their movements are almost caricatures of the imitated action. This does not simply

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[83] *Ibid*.
[84] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 106; Kelly 2000, p. 173.
[85] Similarly, compare the mental effort required to say the alphabet backwards, as opposed to the automatic flow with which we say it forwards.
[86] Gelb & Goldstein (1938, pp. 319-20) themselves use this analogy, but in a different sense, denying that Schneider can experience a melody. Their point, however, is that Schneider cannot experience the melody *as* a melody, that is, *as a whole*. Schneider lives *through* the melody, but he is unable to step back to point to either the individual notes or the melody itself as objects.
[87] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 107.
[88] *Ibid*.
[89] *Ibid*.

highlight that they haven't mastered the subtleties of the task (although it does show that), but more importantly shows that they have a perceptive *Zeigen* awareness of key elements involved.

These conclusions are further supported by another series of experiments by Goodale and his colleagues which 'forced' normal subjects to 'pantomime' a grasping action. The subjects were first allowed to see an object on the table in front of them, following which their vision was obscured, and the object either removed or not. At a given signal, their view was unobscured, and they were instructed to reach for the object or, if it were missing, to reach for where it had been as though it were still there.[90] Both the position of their fingers and the speed with which they moved was "distinctly different" in normal subjects when they were pantomiming grasping.[91] This proved to be true even without the delay, when the subjects were asked simply to pantomime the action.[92] The same experiment was run on DF, who performed significantly worse on the pantomiming tasks, leading the researchers to conclude that she had a "profound inability to construct useful percepts of object features."[93] The act of playing or miming, then, signifies a break away from the direct *Greifen* perception of the object. Our 'motor project,' as Merleau-Ponty puts it, no longer aims at someone or something in the world:

> it aims at my forearm, my arm, my fingers, and it aims at them insofar as they are capable of breaking with their insertion in the given world and of sketching out around me a fictional situation... insofar as I curiously examine this strange signifying machine and set it to work for my own amusement.[94]

Romdenh-Romluc points out that Schneider's inability to play is symptomatic of his wider inability to engage with 'the possible.'[95] She argues that he is only able to perceive opportunities relating to his actual environment and current task, as evidenced by his failure to recognise Goldstein's house outside the context of an errand.[96] And indeed, Merleau-Ponty says that Schneider never went out 'just for a walk,' without some kind of mission.[97] Neither did he tend to improvise in

[90] Goodale *et al*. 1994, p. 1161.
[91] *Ibid*, p. 1163.
[92] *Ibid*, p. 1174.
[93] *Ibid*, p. 1177.
[94] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 114.
[95] Romdenh-Romluc 2007, pp. 52-53.
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 136.

conversation, nor sing on his own, and never took the initiative sexually.[98] His awareness was restricted to the present moment, conscious neither of other possible tasks nor even of events that were not presently engaging him.

> [I]f someone brings a dish to the table, he never wonders where the dish came from. He declares that one sees only in the direction that one looks, and only the objects upon which one focuses... When he complains about the weather, he is asked if he feels better during the winter. He responds: 'I can't say now... for the moment, I can't say anything.'[99]

Schneider is "bound" within the *moment*, he "lacks the concrete freedom that consists in the general power of placing oneself in a situation."[100] There is an obvious parallel here with the 'captivation' (*Benommenheit*) with which Heidegger describes both animal behaviour and Dasein's absorption with the ready-to-hand. There is, however, an important difference between Schneider's boundedness and *Benommenheit*. Both humans absorbed in coping, as well as animals, are not so captivated to the exclusion of other possible courses of action. Dreyfus therefore criticises Romdenh-Romluc for arguing that the *Zeigen* capacity that Schneider lacks is what opens us to the possible, since animals who also lack that capacity are also able to change tasks– their very survival depends on it.[101] He accuses her of succumbing to the intellectualist temptation to understand *Zeigen* and *Greifen* as 'radically different,' and hence of viewing *Zeigen* as completely detached from the world.

The debate between Romdenh-Romluc and Dreyfus is slightly tangential to my argument, and yet is worth a short detour in order to clarify my position on *Zeigen* and *Greifen*. I have argued so far that *Greifen* describes our mode of circumspective perception during coping, while *Zeigen* demonstrates the enactment of *noûs*, the perception of something *as* something. I have argued, with Merleau-Ponty, that these do not show a clear-cut division between body and mind, but rather indicate two functionally independent yet complementary ways of relating to entities. Romdenh-Romluc shares this view but takes it further, to argue that it is the *Zeigen* capacity that gives us the freedom to step-back from coping and switch tasks. Dreyfus counters that animals and infants can also switch tasks while they are engaged in coping, and hence we should be cautious about equating Schneider with an animal way of being, since in

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[98] *Ibid*.
[99] *Ibid*, p. 137.
[100] *Ibid*.
[101] Dreyfus 2007c, p. 69.

this respect, higher animals at least have more in common with normal humans than with Schneider.[102]

There are two abilities in question here, however. The first is the ability to step back and reflect. The second is the ability to change tasks. Romdenh-Romluc is correct to say that these are certainly interrelated for humans. I could be on an errand to the greengrocer, for example, when I walk past Goldstein's house. Recognising it, I could, as Romdenh-Romluc argues, freely decide to interrupt my shopping trip to knock on the door and make an appointment to chat with the doctor about visual agnosia. Yet this is not the only way we switch tasks. I could be on the grocery mission when, passing the house, I notice Goldstein's dog has got out, and is wandering down the street. This in turn solicits me into a new mission, of catching the dog and returning it, and I become so absorbed in this new task that I forget all about the grocery run. This, argues Dreyfus, does not signify reflective thought, but rather the unready-to-hand obstinacy (*Aufsässigkeit*) that breaks into our smooth coping.[103] Our circumspective coping has not here broken down into an awareness of detached, present-at-hand entities, but during this initial interruption of coping, new solicitations begin to summon us more strongly than our initial task. That is, Goldstein's dog need not show up *as* a dog, but our perception of it as an unready-to-hand obstruction to our task breaks our smooth coping and jolts us from one task to the next. Importantly, as we saw earlier, Dreyfus attributes unready-to-hand breaks to higher animals as well as humans.[104] Thus, we find a similar scenario when throwing a frisbee for our dog in the park opposite Goldstein's. The dog races after the frisbee but, noticing Goldstein's dog has got out again, veers off to introduce itself.

Schneider's impairment, then, seems particularly severe insofar as he has lost not just the ability to take entities as present-at-hand, but also as unready-to-hand. He struggles to break out of any task without being explicitly directed by another person.[105] Be that as it may, it does not affect my argument that *Zeigen* is connected to the first ability mentioned above, the ability to step back and reflect. More precisely,

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[102] *Ibid*, pp. 67, 69.
[103] *Ibid*, p. 60; cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 103.
[104] Dreyfus 1991, p. 68. Cf. Dreyfus 1991, pp. 68-9, where he argues that only higher animals can be 'startled' by the unready-to-hand. Insects, for example, living with only syncretic modes of behaviour, simply adapt to new tasks when pulled from one situation to another.
[105] Or so Merleau-Ponty leads us to believe. I do wonder how Schneider responded when, at work sewing wallets, he ran out of materials, or what he did when he felt hungry or sleepy. Presumably he was open to more solicitations than just the verbal cues of his carers, although the literature gives us little detail on these aspects of his life.

as I have argued so far in this Chapter, *Zeigen* signifies the enactment of *noûs*, the direct perception of something *as* something. I have so far argued this primarily through a distinction with *Greifen*. In this final part of this Section, I will briefly lay out what it means to say that *Zeigen* 'carves up' the world, exploring its connection to language, in order to lay the ground for the next section. In doing so I will also discuss one final objection to the claim that Schneider lacks *Zeigen*, namely, that he still possesses linguistic and logical skills.

6.2.2 – *Post-conceptuality and language-use*

in which I argue that Schneider– having acquired a post-conceptual, second-nature 'world'– remains capable of coping within it despite the impairment of his noetic capacity, therefore showing a space between noesis and language-use even where they remain interdependent.

The primary function of *Zeigen*, I have been arguing, is to carve up the world into parts that can be experienced independently and out of the *flow*, as notes isolated from a melody. This is in contrast to *Greifen*, which I have argued is performed *sequentially*. This means that we perform *Greifen* actions in a flowing or habitual way. We can see the evidence for this in ourselves insofar as it is easier and more natural to speak a memorised line of poetry from the beginning than from partway through, and we see it in a more extreme way in Schneider, who was unable to imitate any action unless he performed it from the beginning. This mode of acting, I have suggested, also describes how animals perform their actions. The tricks that trained animals perform have clear signals and a defined goal. The animal's awareness is directed towards that goal, rather than to any of the individual elements. For example, we saw earlier that sign-using chimps appear to understand their signs as *wholes*– 'kiss me' does not translate into 'kiss the dog' even where the chimp appears to understand both the verb and the nouns.[106]

Similarly, Schneider's lack of *Zeigen* also left him with what Merleau-Ponty calls a "number blindness."[107] Although he is able to count and perform arithmetic, he "cannot, however, imagine the number; all of these results are obtained through ritual procedures with which he has no meaningful relation."[108] Schneider does not perform equations with abstract, isolated numbers, but rather performs the task as a procedure, which is again approached sequentially as part of an unbroken whole.

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[106] Pinker 1994, p. 335.
[107] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 135.
[108] *Ibid*.

> When he is asked to complete the equation '5 plus 4 minus 4,' he executes the operation in two steps without 'noticing anything peculiar.' He simply agrees, if it is pointed out to him, that the number 5 'remains.' He does not understand that 'doubling half' of a number is this very same number.[109]

Schneider's arithmetic is therefore approached more as a skill than as mathematics, since he lacks the ability to take numbers abstractly that makes mathematics meaningful.[110]

Zeigen, I have therefore argued, gives the ability to abstract, and in the next Chapter I will argue that this is what makes it– and *noûs*– linguistic or grammatical in a broad sense. Yet it may pre-emptively be objected that, since Schneider is able to both speak and understand language, as well as perform 'abstract' tasks such as mathematics, any argument towards this conclusion is fundamentally flawed. This objection, however, presupposes the 'radical distinction' between *Zeigen* and *Greifen*– in which all language-use belongs to *Zeigen* and the intellect while all action belongs to *Greifen* and the body– that Merleau-Ponty warned was a lapse into intellectualism.[111] We must keep in mind that *Zeigen* and *Greifen* are not separate capacities that deal with different kinds of entities, but are rather two different ways of approaching entities– including linguistic entities– in the world.

Merleau-Ponty gives us the resources to think about the *Zeigen*/*Greifen* distinction with relation to language in a later discussion of Schneider in which he distinguishes between *parole parlant* and *parole parlée*– 'speaking speech' and 'spoken speech.'[112] The *parole parlant* is considered an "authentic act of expression."[113] Speech here is not *expressing* a thought, since Merleau-Ponty holds that authentic speech is *itself* the *accomplishment* of a thought.[114] *Parole parlant* points out and articulates some aspect of the world in direct way. The *parole parlée* is inauthentic in Heidegger's sense that one uses language in this way simply as one finds it, not as original thought, but habitually, as part of a broader pattern of habits, 'as one does.' There is a connection

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[109] *Ibid*.
[110] This *Greifen* sense of mathematics is probably also what lies behind the skill of those African Grey parrots and apes who have been taught to work with numbers. While certainly no mean feat, it probably goes too far to attribute them a knowledge of number *as* number based on their capacity to count or do arithmetic in this way (cf. Hauser *et al*. 2002, p. 1576).
[111] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 125.
[112] *Ibid*, p. 202.
[113] *Ibid*, p. 203.
[114] *Ibid*, p. 183.

here to Heidegger's *Gerede* or 'idle talk' that merely 'passes the word along,' and indeed, there is a direct etymological relation between *Gerede* and *geredet*, a German translation for *parlée*.[115] It is from such a thought that Heidegger later emphasises poetic language as our direct connection to being, but Merleau-Ponty notes that our everyday speech can also be authentic *parole parlant*.[116]

> The same transcendence which we found in the literary uses of speech can also be found in everyday language. This transcendence arises the moment I refuse to content myself with the established language, which is in effect a way of silencing me, and as soon as I truly speak to someone.[117]

Similarly to the way in which, as I argued in Chapter Two, our everyday actions can be authentic while our esoteric expertise can be inauthentic, our everyday speech can be *parlant* where our rhetorical flourishes can be *parlée*. What makes an action or speech authentic has less to do with the particular style, but rather the actor's immersion in the spontaneity of the *moment*.[118] The sophists Plato criticised, whose lack of substance was hidden within eloquent speeches, are still with us today, in the jargon-laden 'business-speak' of many academics, pundits and bureaucrats.[119] Yet the *parole parlée* is not exclusively negative. Just as for Heidegger, inauthenticity is the condition of our authenticity, Baldwin argues that the *parole parlant* and the *parole parlée* are interdependent.[120] While the *parole parlant* demonstrates an authentic awareness of things *as* things, it is the shared structure of the *parole parlée*– "which enjoys the use of available significations like that of an acquired fortune"– that makes the expression and communication of that awareness possible.[121] This only becomes problematic when we lean so heavily on the *parole parlée* that we stop expressing the *parole parlant*– then, the "linguistic and intersubjective world no longer causes us

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[115] Heidegger 1962, p. 212.
[116] Heidegger 1975, pp. 132-4.
[117] Merleau-Ponty 1974, p. 20.
[118] Cf. *supra*, p. 87ff.
[119] It should be recalled that Haugeland liked to translate *Gerede* 'bullshit' (cf. *supra*, p. 68). Rouse (in Haugeland 2013, p. *x*) notes that this should be distinguished from the bullshit discussed by Frankfurt (2005), which refers to language used to impress an audience, and to give an impression that the speaker knows or has done something they haven't, yet without the explicit aim of creating false beliefs in the listener (pp. 16-8). Indeed, bullshit for Frankfurt is defined as being indifferent with truth or falsity in favour of some ulterior aim (*ibid*, pp. 33-4). Frankfurt's bullshit thus differs from *Gerede* and the *parole parlée* insofar as it is an example of using language creatively, if questionably (*ibid*, pp. 52-3). *Parole parlée* describes rather the 'lazy' or unthinking use of words without a full awareness of their relation to their referent.
[120] Baldwin 2007, p. 98.
[121] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 203.

any wonder, [and] we no longer distinguish it from the world itself."[122]

This appears to be the case with Schneider. He is certainly able to use language fluently, just as he is able to fluidly work at stitching together wallets. But:

> He hardly speaks unless he is questioned, or if he takes the initiative of a question, he only ever asks stereotypical questions such as those he asks his children each day when they arrive home from school. He never uses language to express a merely possible situation, and false statements ('the sky is black') are meaningless for him.[123]

In a similar (though subtler) way to the sign-using apes discussed in the previous Section, Schneider encounters language as a ready-to-hand tool. This in itself is not unusual, insofar as it is one of the ways normal subjects use language as well. Rouse, for instance, has argued that we should view the fluid use of language as practical coping, and that speaking our native language is comparable to other intellectual skills with which we navigate unreflectively through a configuration of possibilities.[124] Dreyfus responded that, while there is certainly something to this, it ignores the reflection that occurs when we break the flow to point something out.[125] In Dreyfus'– and Heidegger's– view, *language*– as opposed, perhaps, to 'language-use'– cannot be just another skill with which we cope, because of its very central role in disclosing the world. Therefore, to say that the *parole parlant* demonstrates the apophantic-*as* does not mean that, in our inauthentic use of language, we do not ultimately refer back to objects *as* objects, for the development of language is interdependent with the development of *noûs* and the ability to take something *as* something (the process of *Bildung*, which Schneider also went through). Yet this noetic awareness is not operative in all of our speech. The *parole parlée* describes the use of language circumspectively toward a further goal. We should remember that 'inauthenticity' here ought not to be read with a negative moral connotation, but describes the use of language in an everyday and 'un-owned' way. The point is that the *parole parlant*– as owned speech– is not used in a tool-like way, but is the *logos* drawn directly by the *noûs* from the object experienced apophantically before it.

What makes Schneider different, therefore, is the impairment of this second function

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[122] *Ibid*, p. 189.
[123] *Ibid*, p. 202.
[124] Rouse 2000, p. 19.
[125] Dreyfus 2000, p. 317.

of language for him. We can make this clearer by referring back to Merleau-Ponty's terms. Speech is indeed experienced, when we speak fluidly, as ready-to-hand. Yet the distinction between the *paroles parlée* and *parlant* show that this is not the feature of language which is at issue here. What makes the *parole parlant* possible is the ability to *Zeigen*, or more broadly, to take entities *as* entities. It is this capacity that Schneider lacks, and so while he is able to use language in a tool-like way, as ready-to-hand, he struggles to break out of that smooth coping with language into the broader understanding of being that it normally provides.

Thus we should not be surprised that the loss or impairment of the *Zeigen* capacity in Schneider has not caused him to lose his ability to produce or understand speech. Schneider's inability to take entities conceptually does not signify that he can only take them non-conceptually– that he has reverted to a pre-linguistic mode of being-in-the-world. It signifies that he can only take them *post-conceptually*. *Post-conceptuality*, it will be recalled from Chapter Four, describes coping hermeneutically with conceptual entities– that is, with entities that can only be understood as the entities they are within a cultural 'world' or second-nature.[126] Despite his injury and its consequences, Schneider has nevertheless been initiated into a linguistic and cultural second-nature, and this initiation is essentially irreversible.[127] The entities of second-nature– words, concepts, artefacts, relationships– remain real for Schneider, and he remains able to deal with them post-conceptually, hermeneutically-*as* elements of a task-directed equipmental context. What he has lost is the capacity to take them apophantically-*as entities*, free from the involved context. This is shown as equally in his failure to recognise Goldstein's house when it is not the target of an errand, as much as in his inability to recognise the tautology of five-plus-four-minus-four, and in his absorption in the stereotyped *parole parlée* of everyday language which "never ceases to have this sort of evidentness and self-sufficiency of the real that stifles all interrogation, all reference to the possible, all wonder, and all improvisation."[128]

In this Section, I have sought to strengthen my claim of a link between the faculty of *noûs*– conceptual apprehension– and the ability to point by exploring the impairment of that ability in agnosics. I have argued that the cases of Schneider and DF show a clear distinction between the *Greifen* and *Zeigen* capacities, but that this distinction

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[126] *Supra*, pp. 135ff.

[127] Or at least, it would take brain damage far more severe than that suffered by Schneider to destroy all signs of second-nature, but it is doubtful even in such an extreme case that such a subject could be described as having 'regressed,' if they remained functionally aware at all.

[128] Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 202.

should not be interpreted dualistically, but rather as demonstrating two modes through which we can experience entities. I have argued that these correspond to the hermeneutic/apophantic distinction I argued for in Part One. It follows from this that *Greifen* is experienced as that mode of coping that I have argued we share with non-rational animals. This is further supported by my arguments in the previous Section that even the most intelligent human-reared chimps cannot point declaratively, but use gestures rather as tools within a captivated equipmental context. This shows parallels with Schneider, who has lost his ability to point, and more broadly, lost his ability to act outside of a similarly captivated (*benommen*) equipmental context. This does not mean that Schneider has reverted to a 'mere animal,' for he continues to cope post-conceptually within a second-natural cultural world. Indeed, one might argue that Schneider's noetic faculty is severely impaired rather than completely destroyed. Nevertheless, the core of my argument remains, that *Greifen* and *Zeigen* describe distinct modes of understanding entities in the world, and that it is the *Zeigen* capacity that allows us to 'carve up' the world to be experienced as isolated parts. I have already suggested that this capacity is intimately connected to a grammatical understanding of the world, and it is to this point that I now turn in the final Chapter.

Conclusions

The aim of this Chapter was to show that humans inhabit the world *linguistically*. I have argued this in three stages. Firstly, I argued for the faculty of *noûs* as conceptual perception. Secondly, I showed the difference in intentional experience when *noûs* is operative against when it is not. Thirdly, I argued that this difference comes down to the grammatical structure of *noûs*, through which we are able both to see entities as united with their properties, and to separate and re-combine them.

In this Chapter, I have offered support for the relation between *noûs*, language, and second nature I posited in Chapter Five. I argued that the ability to declaratively point, which arises in human infants with the acquisition of language, signifies the presence of a noetic awareness of entities *as* entities. This pointing-out of something for others to see differs from the imperative-pointing of human-raised chimps, whose gestures– like the communicative signals of other animals– are better understood as ready-to-hand equipment used for a task. Declarative pointing, on the other hand, presupposes an awareness of the Thing, isolated from its context. This conclusion was further supported by my discussion of Schneider, whose loss of his ability to point signified

the loss of his *Zeigen* mode of intentionality, which I identified with the enactment of *noûs*. His retention of the *Greifen* or grasping capacity demonstrates that these two modes of intentionality are separable and complementary in humans. The arising of *noûs* with the acquisition of language supports the claim that their appearance marks the development of second nature and induction into the space of reasons. Schneider's retention of language despite the loss of *Zeigen* suggests that we remain able to navigate that second-natural space post-conceptually, with only the *Greifen* capacity.

Thus, the conclusions of this Chapter further support my thesis that human intentionality is comprised of both a post-conceptual understanding that experiences second-nature entities in a mode parallel to animal coping, and a noetic, conceptual understanding, which takes entities *as* the *logos*, *as* entities that can be separated, abstracted, and re-combined away from the *moment* of their apprehension.

In the next and final Chapter, I will argue that *noesis* achieves this by structuring perception and thought *grammatically*, and argue that this structure both opens the possibility of abstract thought, as well as creating the potential of a disconnect between linguistic content and the content of our experience.

Chapter Seven
Carving Nature at the Joints

In Part Two so far I have argued that the 'abyss' between humans and animals centres on our possession of the faculty of *noûs*, which enables us to perceive the world in the *Zeigen* mode– that is, to point out entities *as* entities, separate from the tasks of involved coping. I have repeatedly suggested that this mode of understanding ought to be described as *grammatical*. In this Chapter, I will argue for this conclusion by expanding on my discussion in the previous Chapters of *noûs*'s power to separate elements out of the sequentially-experienced whole of human coping. I will do this in three stages. I first argue that this separation and recombination is what Heidegger means when he describes the *logos apophantikos* as structured by *synthesis* and *diairesis*; therefore, we ought to further understand *noesis* as the action of abstracting– of combining, separating, and re-combining– the elements perceived with *noûs*.

I then argue that this noetic capacity– which develops spontaneously in human infants as part of language acquisition– is consistent with Chomsky's theory that human thought is made possible by a faculty of Universal Grammar. This theory offers empirical support for my thesis that the biological development of *noûs* in an individual occurs in a feedback loop with their initiation or *Bildung* into human second nature as part of a greater holistic process of becoming human, entering into a 'world' where both physical stimuli and conceptual objects are encountered as things, as well as coped with reflexively.

Finally, I defend this account against objections that might take my account to imply an internalist account of a mind radically separated from the world. I argue that such a reading presumes the human being to exist as an isolated individual. I stress that the human is an embodied, social being, and defend the plausibility of my account by arguing that language and *noesis* evolved together with the second natural 'niche' that humans inhabit, and that the culturally-shared nature of this niche closes off an internalist reading. Nevertheless, the influence of culture in building our world seems to suggest some form of linguistic or cultural relativism, and so in the final section I examine my thesis in the light of the so-called 'Whorfian hypothesis.' I argue that the process of concept-acquisition detailed above does imply that different communities will have access to different concepts, experienced *as* entities, and so in a sense will

have different worlds. However, I deny a 'strong' Whorfian claim that such worlds are incommensurable, arguing that translation always remains a possibility, and that concept possession can differ just as much within a culture as without it. I close with some thoughts on the implications of this for the connection of our concepts to the experiences from which they are drawn.

7.1 – Synthesis *and* Diairesis

in which I outline Heidegger's claim that* noûs *is grounded in the functions of* synthesis *(binding) and* diairesis *(separating), showing* noesis *as a mode of perception whose content is structured grammatically.

My thesis in this Chapter is that our noetic perception is grammatically-structured. In this first Section, I will elaborate on what that means in this context by examining Heidegger's claim that *noûs*– *vernehmen*– is grounded in what Aristotle called *synthesis*– 'binding' or 'relating'– and *diairesis*– 'separating.' Just as I argued in the previous Chapters that our capacity for language is underwritten by a noetic capacity to point out or 'take' things *as* isolated things– as 'notes' isolated from the sequential 'melody' of coping– so now I will argue that the structure of *noesis* enables a capacity to recombine such elements of experience into new, wider, thoughts.

In the discussion of *vernehmen* in the *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* lectures that I drew upon in Chapter Five, Heidegger devotes a section to the Aristotelian concepts of *synthesis* and *diairesis*, where he expands in detail on the rushed treatment he gave the topic in *Being and Time*.[1] Heidegger explicitly connects *synthesis* to the apophantic-as structure of noetic (*vernehmende*) perception.

> The 'as' pertains to a *synthesis*, to a *relating*, and specifically to a *synthesis noeimaton*, to a connection of representations, to the apprehending formation of a unity [*vernehmenden Einheit-bilden*] or a unity-forming apprehension [*einheitbildenden Vernehmen*].[2]

Yet Heidegger here immediately points out that for Aristotle, everything that can be described as a *synthesis* can also be described as a *diairesis*, a 'taking apart.'[3] It is not

[1] Heidegger 1995, p. 315; cf. Heidegger 1962, pp. 201-2.
[2] Heidegger 1995, p. 315.
[3] Heidegger's source for this discussion is *De Interpretatione*, Aristotle's treatise on logic and grammar. Heidegger's thesis is that this text should not be read simply as an investigation into the structure of language, but that it describes the relation of language to our being-in-the-world, and how our understanding is linguistically-structured.

enough, then, to simply say that *vernehmen* is taking some entity *as* a unity. *Vernehmen* is "intrinsically *a taking together that takes apart*."[4] This means that the taking '*as* a whole' that *vernehmen* describes– taking something *as* the *logos*– rests on taking it together– that is, as a unity– while taking that unity apart in terms of its properties– taking it from a particular angle. Therefore, "the entire structure of the *logos apophantikos* [the content of *vernehmen*] is grounded in *synthesis*, which in itself is simultaneously *diairesis*."[5]

Heidegger draws our attention to the consequence that truth and falsity (*aletheia* and *pseudesthai*, or revealing and concealing)– which, as we have seen, are tied to the *logos* and the apophantic-*as*– are therefore also grounded in *synthesis* and *diairesis*.[6] He argues this by returning to his example of the blackboard. By asserting it apophantically, we point out the blackboard *as* an entity, something present-at-hand with properties. We can do so either positively or negatively, by saying 'the board is black' or 'the board is not red.'

> The pointing out can be such as to *ascribe* something to whatever the pointing out is concerned with, or such as to *deny* it something in pointing it out... In each case there occurs a pointing out of the board as such, and this pointing out is in each case a *revealing*, a true pointing out.[7]

Yet a false statement is an assertive pointing out just as much as a true one. If we say 'the board is not black' or 'the board is red,' then

> here too we have a 'toward' and 'away,' in each case a tendency to point out, in each case *concealing*, false.[8]

All of these statements– positive and negative true, and positive and negative false– are grounded in their separation of entities from their properties, asserting them together or apart. Therefore, Heidegger claims, the "unity of this structure," of *logos* grounded in the taking-together-that-takes-apart, "is *noûs*," as the direct perception

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[4] Heidegger 1995, p. 316, Heidegger's emphasis.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 317.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 316.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] *Ibid*. Cf. *supra*, p. 110, where we saw McNeill (1999, p. 239) argue that while the cat has access to the dog hermeneutically-*as* a threat "*and not* as its food," the 'and not' itself remains closed to the animal *as such*, which is to say, the animal has no access to *truth* or *falsity* in the sense discussed here.

that gives access to entities *as* entities, together with their properties.[9] To give Heidegger's example, when we assert that a board is badly-positioned, "we do not first think of the bad position and then add it to the board."[10] We rather take the board and its bad position as a unity, which we then separate into parts. The act of *noesis* or apprehension perceives the entity at once as unity and at the same time as separated.[11]

Heidegger's discussion here is not merely a description of language, but carries the implication that the structure of language reflects the structure of noetic experience in a mutually-dependent way. He explicitly discusses the role of the *logos apophantikos* as pointing out what is present-at-hand.[12] What are taken together and apart, then, for Heidegger, are not just linguistic phrases, but the entities themselves and their properties– indeed, it is the perceptions of these– the *noemata*– that serve as the basis for natural language. As he puts it in *Being and Time*: "to significations, words accrue."[13]

We thus get a more nuanced picture of the way *noûs*, as a perceptual capacity, underscores language. The *vernehmen*-perception of entities *as* entities signifies the capacity to immediately see entities together with their properties, as a unity, but also to take them separately– as well as, furthermore, to capacity see those properties themselves as entities (for example, the 'blackness' of the board). Expressed as the *logos*, such entities can then be separated and recombined in ways that are now true or false. That is, this grammatical mode of perception allows us to combine elements of our noetic perception as the ground of abstract thought– 'the board could be better positioned'– but also as false thought– 'the board is red.' This suggests that the uniquely human capacities I have discussed in this this thesis– capacities such as non-sequential reasoning, planning and action, recursive thinking, and projection– have their roots in a grammatical understanding of the world.

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[9] Heidegger 1995, p. 317.
[10] *Ibid*, p. 318.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Ibid*, p. 319.
[13] Heidegger 1962, p. 204.

7.2 – *Universal Grammar*

in which I suggest that the grammaticality of* noesis *ought to be understood in the terms of Chomsky's Universal Grammar.

I have so far argued that *noûs* is grammatically-structured, which means that it enables its objects to be separated and recombined, and that it is a mode of perception that serves as a precondition for the use of natural language. In this Section, I will offer some empirical plausibility for these claims by relating them to Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar. While Chomsky's theory is still evolving and by no means universally accepted, I will argue that its most uncontentious claims– that the human language faculty is innate, that language acquisition is a stage in our normal biological development, and that grammatical language's exponential capacity for abstraction is powered by its recursivity– are consistent with and suggest mechanisms for my argument that the acquisition of language is the result of the development of a noetic faculty which gives us access to entities *as* entities and supports our initiation or *Bildung* into a second natural 'world.'

I will argue that the grammatical organisation of language reveals underlying structures of thought, and that the capacity to 'merge' and 'move' linguistic items demonstrates that we do not experience such elements merely sequentially. I argue that this supports my claim that *noûs* is an acquired faculty tied to language that separates us from animals and their sequential mode of understanding, and indeed, that the theory of Universal Grammar assumes a human ability to perceive the world in the noetic way I have described.

The noetic elements which underwrite language are entities experienced *as* objects, that is, conceptually. We saw in the previous Section that such entities include the objects of our experience as well as their properties, which can also be experienced as entities, and which can be separated and combined in different ways. Fodor, too, has argued that the central feature of concepts is their "compositionality."[14] Different concepts, such as 'red,' 'drum,' and 'face' can be combined, according to certain norms, into new concepts such as 'red drum' or 'red face' or 'red drum-face.' Fodor argues this based on his observation that languages operate with a 'combinatorial semantics.'[15] This describes the fact that a half-decent speaker of any language who understands a sentence *aRb* (lexical items *a* and *b* connected by relationship *R*) will also understand

[14] Fodor 1998, pp. 94-100.
[15] Fodor 1987, p. 137.

the sentence *bRa*.[16] Therefore, someone who understands 'Jane kissed Mary' will immediately understand 'Mary kissed Jane,' irrespective of the truth or likelihood of the latter, or whether they have heard it before. This stands in contrast to the sign-using chimps we saw above, who were unable to recombine signs ('kiss' + 'me' to 'kiss' + 'the dog') that they had learned as a whole.[17] As I have argued, non-rational animals, using signs in an indicative-imperative way, experience them *sequentially*. The signal conveys an action to be performed, and cannot simply describe a thing or state of affairs.

Fodor argues that the combinatorial semantics of human languages is made possible by syntax.[18] This is reflected, as I have also noted, in the grammatical structure of natural languages. Yet what is important here is not the grammar of any particular language but rather that grammars themselves are the visible symptoms of this underlying structure of experience, what I have called *noesis*. Similarly, Chomsky has famously argued, the wide variety of grammatical organisations found in human languages are the surface manifestations of an underlying structure that makes them possible, and which he calls 'Universal Grammar.'[19] Chomsky's theory has been much discussed, adapted, and criticised, yet its basic premise– that the human mind at birth is equipped, under normal conditions, to acquire language in a regular way– is widely accepted among linguists.[20] This does not mean that grammar, natural language, or conceptual understanding are present from birth but that– like other biological traits, such those arising through puberty, for example– language will be acquired at ages and along a path of stages that is uniform across the human species, barring any significant physiological or environmental disruption.[21]

The 'grammar' in Universal Grammar therefore refers not simply to the structure of sentences in natural languages, but to the underlying mental organisation that make that possible. In his initial articulations of the theory, Chomsky distinguished between 'surface structure' and 'deep structure,' where surface structure is concerned with the interpretation of the meaning of the words at the level of a spoken sentence, while

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[16] Similarly, Evans' (1982, p. 104) 'Generality Constraint' states that "if a subject can be credited with the thought that *a* is *F*, then he must have the conceptual resources for entertaining the thought that *a* is *G*, for every property of being *G* of which he has a conception."
[17] Pinker 1994, p. 335.
[18] Fodor 1998, p. 99.
[19] Chomsky 1980, p. 28.
[20] *Ibid*, p. 65; Briscoe 2000, pp. 245-6.
[21] For example, evidence suggests that if children are not exposed to language during the so-called 'critical period' of the early years of life, they will not be able to acquire full grammatical language later in life. See Grimshaw *et al.* 1998, pp. 238-9.

deep structure is concerned with the semantics of the sentence's underlying structure.[22] This in turn was related to the distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' generativity, which Chomsky gave as criteria for judging whether a posited grammar (that is, a theory of linguistic structure) is descriptively adequate.[23] A grammar is 'weakly generative' if it can generate a set of natural language sentences, and it is 'strongly generative' if it can generate a set of structural descriptions.[24] Chomsky's essential thesis was that a single deep-structural grammar can account for the strong generativity of all natural languages. That is, while the surface grammars of English, Finnish, and Wiradjuri are vastly diverse, Chomsky held that at the deep-structural level they can be described in the same terms, as performing the same transformations on the same basic items, although the differences in the way transformational rules are applied and manifested at the surface level makes the languages as diverse as they are.

Chomsky has more recently refined and attempted to simplify the theory of Universal Grammar along the lines of what he calls the 'Minimalist Program.'[25] Here, Chomsky drops talk of 'deep-' and 'surface-structure' in favour of a single operation he calls Merge.[26] Merge describes the process of combining a pair of syntactic objects, replacing them with a single, new combined syntactic object, thus accounting for language's recursivity.[27] However, it is important to note in this connection that Chomsky considers his work a 'program' rather than a 'theory'– that is, an ongoing pursuit rather than a fixed framework. We should therefore be aware that many of the finer details of Universal Grammar as I discuss it here are the subject of ongoing debates among linguists, and that Chomsky's own views have evolved considerably– with the reduction of deep-structural operations to Merge an obvious case in point. Nevertheless, Chomsky maintains that the 'minimalist program' is, in its central respects, a “seamless continuation” of his earlier work.[28] For my purposes in this thesis, the precise details of linguistic theory are less important than the less contentious central aspects of Chomsky's work that I lay out here– namely, that the language faculty is innate, and that natural language is underwritten by a Universal Grammar that operates as a recursive system of “discrete infinity” allowing the separation and re-combination of distinct syntactic objects, and hence lines up with

[22] Chomsky 1965, p. 16.
[23] *Ibid*, p. 60.
[24] *Ibid*.
[25] Chomsky 2015, p. *ix*.
[26] *Ibid*, pp. 171-5.
[27] *Ibid*, pp. 207-8.
[28] *Ibid*, p. *vii*.

the processes of *synthesis* and *diairesis* described above.[29]

Central to Chomsky's theory is the notion that Universal Grammar– and hence language– is innate in humans.[30] This does not mean that natural language itself is present from birth, nor does it mean that that the grammatical rules of any particular language are present at birth, for infants acquire languages as diverse as English, Cantonese, or Xhosa with equal ease.[31] What is innate is rather the *potentiality* for infants to acquire language. Language acquisition, argues Chomsky, is a feature of the infant human's biological development. Like the later process of puberty, it involves the development of characteristics that are not themselves present at birth, but that proceed spontaneously unless severely disrupted through injury, illness, or environmental disturbance. Chomsky argues that this process is evidenced by the ease with which infants acquire their mother tongue: "Compared with the number of sentences that a child can produce or interpret with ease," he argues, "the number of seconds in a lifetime is ridiculously small."[32] Infant humans are wired to be sensitive to language such that exposure to it acts as a trigger for its rapid development.[33] As I will argue below, this development is part of a deeper development of a parallel awareness of grammatical structure and of objects *as* objects.

Chomskyan linguists show both deep-structure as well as the operation of Merge through 'X-Bar' diagrams.[34] While a detailed analysis would be out of place here, a brief look at some simple examples will prove useful and adequate for our subsequent discussion (see Figure Two). What will be significant for my thesis is that these schemas make evident the way in which, at the underlying level, the language faculty carves up the world. For example, the above sentence **(1)** 'Jane kissed Mary'[35] is built out of a 'noun' or 'determiner phrase' ('Jane') and a 'verb phrase' ('kiss-', 'Mary,' which is itself built from a conjugated verb and a determiner phrase[36]). 'Jane' and 'kiss-' are the 'heads' of their respective phrases– they determine the semantic category (noun, verb, adjective, and so on) of their phase of the tree.

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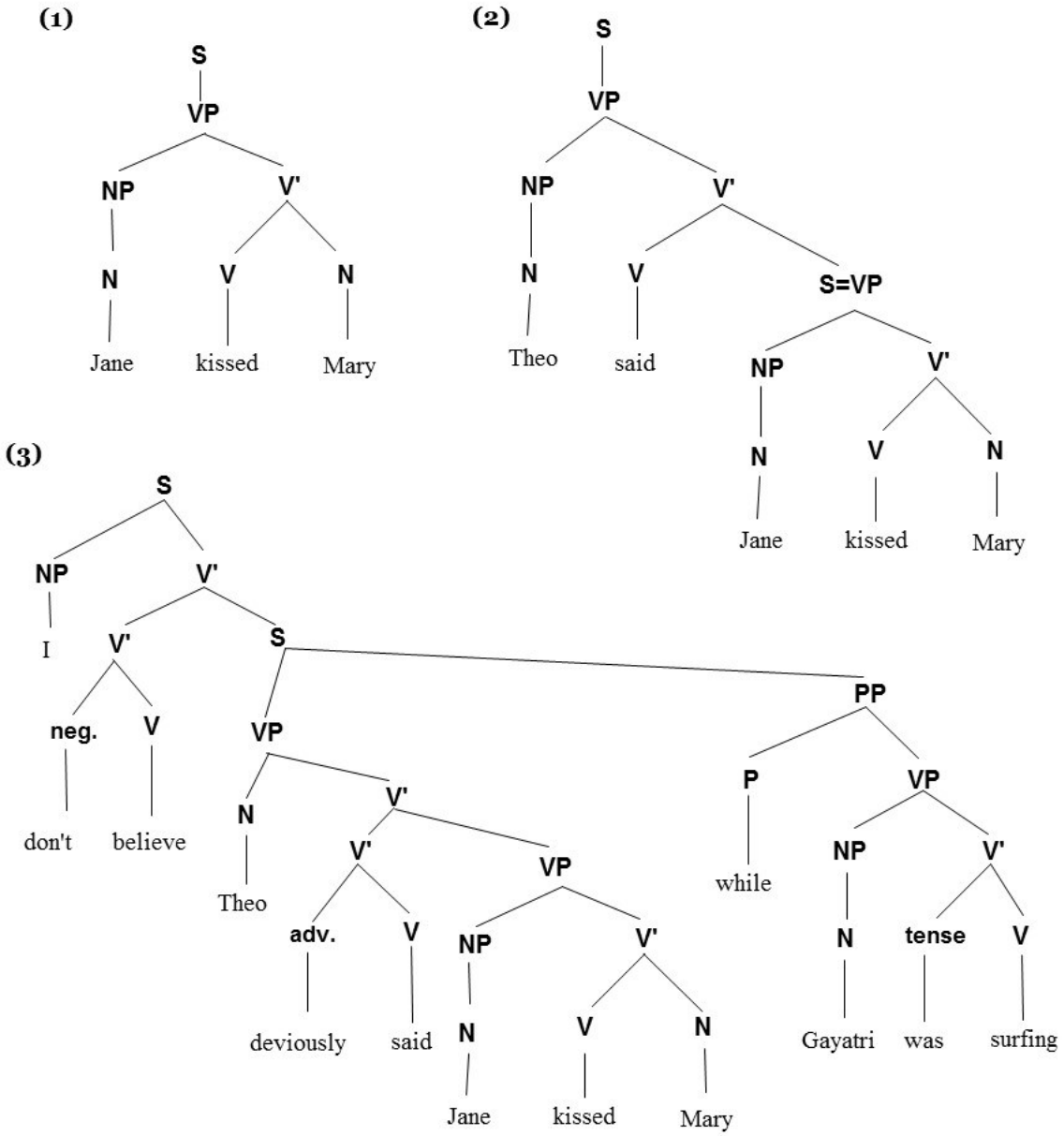
[29] Chomsky 2008, p. 137.
[30] Chomsky 1967, p. 2.
[31] *Ibid*, p. 3.
[32] *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.
[33] Mattingly (1972, p. 328) has compared infants' responses to language to the instinctive response by other animals to 'releasers,' and offers evidence that we are wired to be particularly sensitive to subtle differences in phonemes. I will expand on this in 7.3.3 below.
[34] Jackendoff 1977, p. 33-7; Chomsky 2015, pp. 157-70, 222-34.
[35] Throughout this section, example sentences will be numbered for ease of reference.
[36] Note that in English, proper names tend to have a 'null' determiner slot, and so we find only a noun ('Mary') without a determiner ('the,' 'a,' etc.).

Figure Two: X-Bar diagrams



Key:

X	=	phrase head	**N**	=	noun	**A**	=	adjective
X'	=	intermediate phrase level	**P**	=	preposition	**D**	=	determiner
			S	=	sentence	**I**	=	inflection
XP	=	*x* phrase	**V**	=	verb	**IntQ**	=	interrogative/ question
det.	=	determiner	**(t)**	=	trace			
neg.	=	negative						

NB. For the sake of simplicity, I have mostly shown determiner phrases simply as nouns or noun phrases, since many DPs in English (e.g., proper names) have a 'null' determiner, and the distinction between varieties of nouns is not crucial to my argument in this thesis (cf. p. 194, n. 36).

Figure Two (cont.)

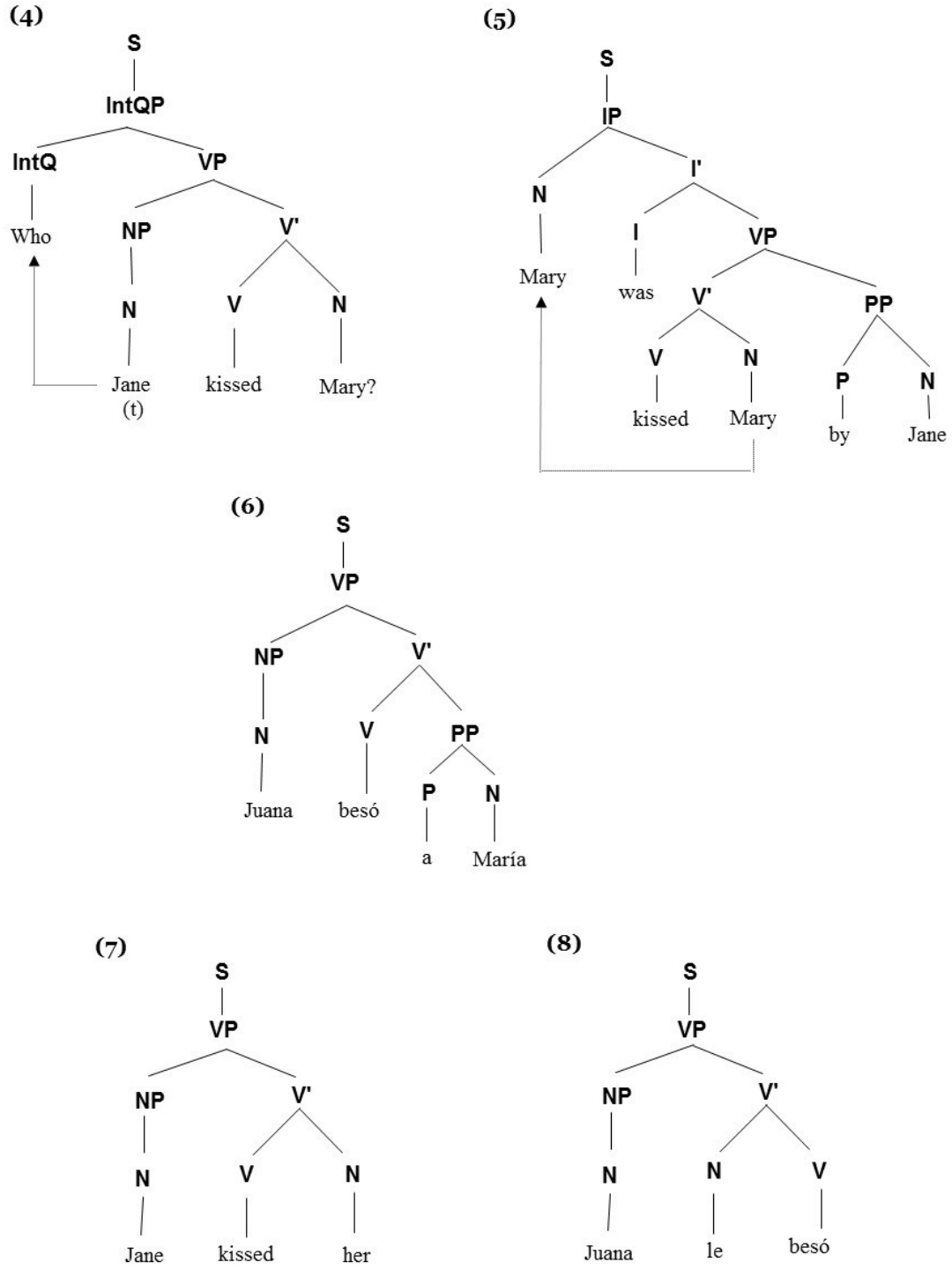
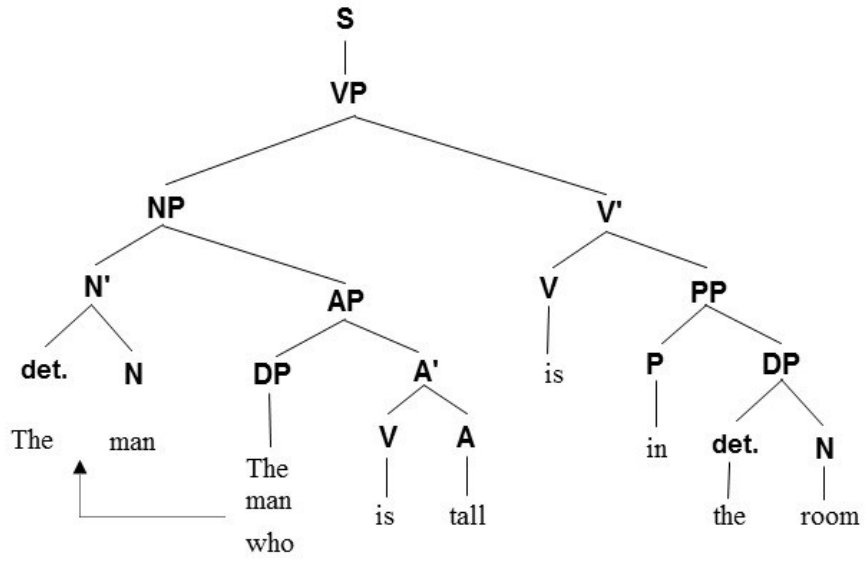
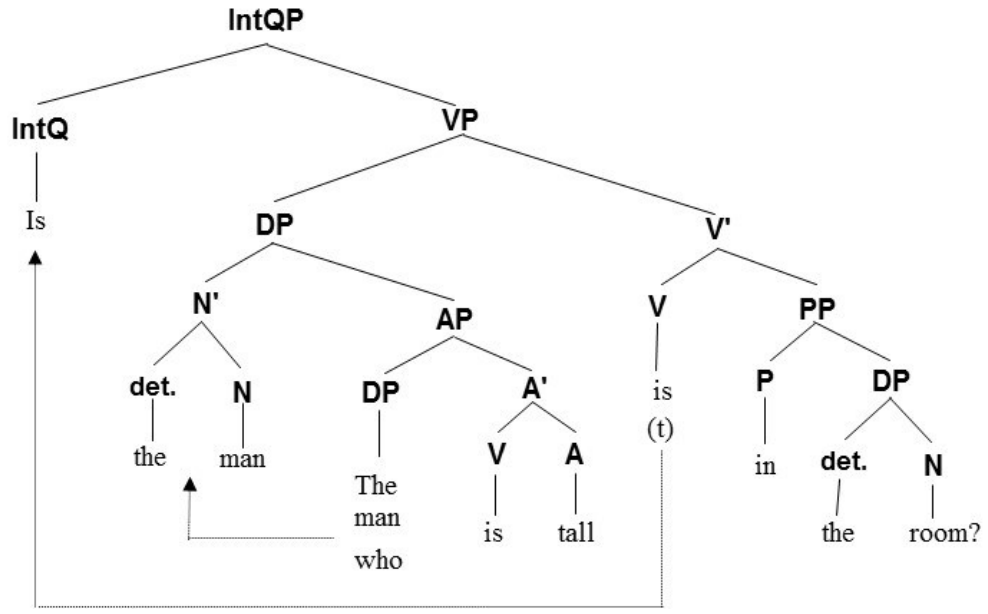


Figure Two (cont.)

(9)



(10)



One important function of grammar is the ability to 'merge' distinct items into a single phrase and embed them in another sentence.[37] For example, while **(1)** 'Jane kissed Mary' forms a sentence on its own, that sentence can itself form a 'verb phrase' of **(2)** 'Theo said Jane kissed Mary.' This itself can be embedded within **(3)** 'I don't believe Theo deviously said Jane kissed Mary on the beach while Gayatri was surfing,' and so on. It is through Merge that language gets its recursivity, and becomes a "system of discrete infinity."[38]

As well as Merging elements, we can also Move and recombine them.[39] We can see this if we form a question from **(1)**, and get **(4)** 'Who kissed Mary?'. Here we find a simple, normative movement– the determiner phrase (Mary/'who') moves up through the empty argument slots of the sentence, changing it to a question. Yet note that the essential structure remains unchanged– the individual syntactic objects continue to relate to each other within the same overall framework. A more complex modification would be to put the sentence into the passive, that is, **(5)** 'Mary was kissed by Jane.' Here, 'Mary' moves into an inflection phrase, and the verb phrase 'kiss-' contains an embedded 'preposition phrase.' Yet here, too, we see that on the structural level, the different grammatical operations are being performed on the same basic syntactic objects, which combine regularly. Such operations may be shared across languages in some ways; therefore, the Spanish **(6)** 'Juana besó a María' conforms to the same structure as **(1)**. Even where English and Spanish assign pronouns in different ways– **(7)** 'Jane kissed *her*' against **(8)** 'Juana *le* besó'– the trees show us that the underlying structure is nonetheless shared. Through the ability to Merge and Move linguistic items, language users gain the capacity to represent more and more abstract states of affairs.[40]

It is from the underlying structural identity of languages that Chomsky argues for Universal Grammar as an innate ability to recognise the structural components of a natural language and to apply regular rules to their transformation. The innateness of this ability is supported by the way even very young children use language. Firstly, according to the so-called 'Poverty of the Stimulus' argument alluded to above, children are able to understand and produce more sentences than they could possibly

[37] Chomsky 2005, p. 11.
[38] *Ibid*.
[39] In more recent versions of the minimalist program, Chomsky (2008, pp. 140-1) has suggested that 'Move' is a form of Merge and comes 'for free' within the operations of the latter.
[40] 'Represent' here means to represent in language insofar as sentences relate to states of affairs in the world. There is at this point no claim of a representational theory of mind.

have heard and practised, as well as being able to recognise previously-unheard sentences as either grammatical or ungrammatical.[41] Secondly, the kinds of errors children *do* make follow a regular pattern. It is not unusual for a child to say 'I go-ed to the park' instead of 'I *went* to the park,' but it is unheard of for a developmentally-normal young native English speaker to say 'I park the to went.' This demonstrates that even at a very early stage, children are aware that the sentence gets its meaning from its structure.[42]

This may seem obvious to speakers of a natural language. Yet Chomsky points out that the structural organisation of language is far from the most straightforward or intuitive mode of computing lexical items.[43] Take the example: **(9)** 'The man who is tall is in the room.' While this is at first glance much more complex than **(1)**, we can see that it is ultimately formed of a similar relation between a noun phrase and a verb phrase. If we are to turn this into a question, it becomes **(10)** 'Is the man who is tall in the room?' Note how this change follows a similarly regular pattern to **(5)**. The verb phrase 'is' moves up through the empty slots of the specifiers of each phase head. However, the apparent simplicity of this movement betrays a very complex state of affairs. How is it, as English speakers, that we know to move the second 'is' and not the first? If we were to take the words sequentially, we have no reason to prefer the second 'is.' Neither could we invent some rule such as 'move the sixth word from the start' or 'move the fourth word from the end,' for such rules would quickly break down with, for example, 'The man who your mother said is quite unusually tall is still in the corner of the living room.'

The explanatory power of Chomsky's theory is that it explains why English-speakers immediately, and from a very young age, recognise that we move the second 'is' because it is part of the verb phrase. Yet, it must be stressed, Chomsky's claim is not about English. Even languages which form questions in a different way are still doing so by modifying similar, basic syntactic objects. The relevant point for our purposes

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[41] Chomsky 1980, p. 42-4.

[42] Cf. Chomsky 1988, pp. 45-6. Errors like 'go-ed' actually show quite a sophisticated understanding of verb conjugation and tenses, and anyone learning a second tongue quickly becomes sympathetic to a child's struggle with irregular verbs.

[43] Chomsky 1976, pp. 30-2. This is one of the reasons why computers have thus far been unsuccessful at producing natural language, despite being efficient, sequential logical processors. Even the more successful of recent natural language simulators depend more for their success on the probabilistic crunching of 'big data' than anything approaching an understanding of grammatical structure. That developing infants are not performing similar probabilistic calculations is another consequence of the 'poverty of the stimulus' arguments, which draws on observations of infants producing novel grammatical sentences from elements they have not previously been exposed to.

is that, no matter how they go on to organise such structures at the surface level, all languages are built out of such discrete items, and to be able to speak a language means to have an awareness of these items, to understand them individually, to be able to Merge them with other items and embed them in a larger structure, and to Move them in order to change the emphasis or the meaning of the sentence.

We therefore find some important correspondences between Chomsky's description of Universal Grammar, and the understanding of *noûs* I have been developing. Both describe a faculty that is uniquely human– indeed, grammatical understanding is so different from the animal's sequential understanding and communication that, as we saw, Chomsky (with colleagues) has suggested that communication may not be its primary– or at least, may not have been its initial– function (or more precisely, as I will argue in more detail below, we should say that the capacity to apprehend (*vernehmen*/*noesis*) is one that develops via the communicative triggers of deictic triangulation).[44]

Both Universal Grammar and my account of *noesis* describe an understanding of entities in terms of structures that can be combined, moved, and recombined, and so abstracted away from their original experience. And significantly, both *noûs* and Universal Grammar are not operative in humans from the beginning, but come into play as the infant matures, and are marked by the appearance of pointing and speaking. Developing second-nature *is* developing *noûs*, Universal Grammar, and therefore language, although– as I will suggest below– under a more robust sense of second nature, *Bildung* is not complete with the acquisition of language, but also requires the absorption of more sophisticated social norms. In this case, *noûs* is just the first step of *Bildung* and the prerequisite for what follows. At any rate, in developing second nature, we enter a space where we point out things *as* things, and hence hold them to be true.

7.3 – Noesis *and truth*

in which I argue, by answering objections to my association of* noûs *with Universal Grammar, that humans have evolved to live in a shared, cultural world built by language, and that this creates a gap between our knowledge and experience

I have been arguing in this Chapter that our noetic perception– of things *as* things–

[44] Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch, 2002, p. 1574; cf. Chomsky 2005, p. 3.

is grammatically-structured. Grounded in *synthesis* and *diairesis*, *noûs* is a "taking-together-that-takes-apart." Noetic perception gives us the ability to perceive deeper into and beyond the entity we perceive; it allows us to abstract. For this reason, Heidegger argues that only *vernehmen*, unlike animal perception, should really be considered *Perception*– that is, *Wahrnehmung*, 'taking as true.' However– as I will explore in what follows– this ability to take something as true by abstracting it brings with it the ability to take things as false. As our apprehension separates and combines noetic perceptions, it creates the possibility to take things as they are not.

In exploring these implications, I will defend the plausibility of my association of *noûs* and Universal Grammar. While it would be simplistic to identify *noûs* and Universal Grammar, I have nevertheless suggested that Universal Grammar describes the organisational structure of *noûs*, which is the capacity to see the world in terms of words, or more precisely, the *logos*. If the theory of Universal Grammar is true– even if only in the essential details I have described here– it presupposes an ability to *perceive* the elements it isolates and moves. Universal Grammar is therefore evidence for a faculty of *noûs,* the structure of the mind that makes language and thought possible.

To defend this view, I will expand on some of the subtleties of my account in order to deal with several potential objections. Firstly, I briefly return to the relationship of *synthesis* and *diairesis* to the possibility of experiencing truth and falsity to show why the noetic perception of *things* also implies an awareness of the gaps between things, which explains why Universal Grammar is not merely concerned with noun phrases (as 'things') but also contains a perception of functional roles such as determiners and conjunctions.

I then justify my invocation of some form of Universal Grammar as an evolutionarily plausible way of understanding the biological development of *noûs* and its connection to language. I will then expand on my above suggestion– that the development of *noûs* in the individual is triggered by their social interaction and the shared experience of deictic triangulation– to argue that this view does not imply an individualistic internalism.

However, in my final Section, I will look again at the feedback that occurs between our post-conceptual coping and our conceptual reflection in the space of second nature, to argue that– since we can experience concepts both immediately as *things* as well as

in our post-conceptual coping– there is a sense in which our second natural experience is dependent upon the concepts we have acquired. This invites, I will suggest, a weak version of the so-called 'Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis, although I will offer a less controversial account that sees cross-cultural differences as the result of differences between shared, conceptual 'worlds' borne by the interaction of language and coping, rather than a strong Whorfian claim that treats posited differences as the incommensurable result of differences in the surface grammars of natural languages.

7.3.1 – *Seeing the gaps*

in which I answer the first objection– that Universal Grammar contains heads not just for things but for functional categories

I have been arguing in this Chapter that *noûs*– grounded as it is in *synthesis* and *diairesis*– is structured grammatically, and that we can make sense of this by comparing it to what Chomsky calls Universal Grammar, which he argues gives a description of the mechanisms underlying natural languages and enabling abstract, human thought. In the first Section, I argued that Heidegger's account of *synthesis* and *diairesis* offers a description of the way noetic thought creates abstract objects by separating objects from their properties and recombining them to offer new descriptions. In the second Section, I suggested– through an examination of X-bar models– that the operations of Move and Merge at the level of words signifies an underlying process of separation and recombination.

It may be objected, however, that the account I gave there is oversimplified, insofar as I focus on the merging and moving of relatively basic nouns and verbs. Indeed, an important difference between Heidegger and Chomsky here is that the former's account focuses mainly on objects and their properties– nouns and predicates– whereas Universal Grammar involves a more complex picture that includes functional categories such as determiners, conjunctions, and negations. It is difficult to see exactly how we might be said to 'see' such functional categories, in the way that I have argued that *noesis* is a form of perceiving the objects and properties that we combine and separate.

However, these worries can be surmounted by recalling that, for Heidegger, *noesis*, as a 'taking-together-that-takes-apart,' gives us access to truth– in the sense of *aletheia* or 'revealing'– and that this always involves a complementary movement of concealing– *pseudesthai*, falsity. Having *noûs* means not only that we can take things as true– revealed *as* things– but that we can also reveal things as false. Heidegger's

simple example is that we can falsely say the blackboard 'is red,' although we could also explicitly represent the board falsely as 'not there.' This is in contrast to animals who, lacking noetic perception, have only an implicit 'not,' in the sense that, as we saw McNeill argue in Chapter Three, a cat might represent a dog as a 'threat' and *not* as its potential dinner, but that any such 'and not' is closed off to its experience.[45]

The grammatical perception of something apophantically-*as* something means taking it from a particular angle, separating the 'notes' from the 'melody.' The perception of something *as something* is also, implicitly, the perception of gaps, of what it is not. This perception of gaps is essential to *noesis*. We saw in the previous Chapter, for example, that both Schneider and DF– with the impairment of their *Zeigen* capacity– lost their ability to play and to pantomime.[46] Unable to separate out the elements of any activity, they could only complete tasks that they began from the beginning, and performed sequentially as a whole.

Noesis, then, as a perception of things *as* things, is therefore by necessity also a perception of the gaps between things.[47] Such gaps, we could reasonably expect, are experienced in different ways, and this is evidenced by the appearance of functional categories at the surface level of spoken speech. While determiner words pick out an object *as* an apophantic-'*this*' or '*that*,' negations signify the gap perceived where '*this*' is not '*that*,' while conjunctions express the gap where '*this*' is with '*that*.'[48] As in the case of merging and moving other phrases, that speakers know intuitively when to use which words suggests a direct perception of the underlying distinctions.

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[45] McNeill 1999, p. 239; cf. *supra*, p. 114.

[46] *Supra*, pp. 175-6.

[47] Note that 'perception' here refers to noetic perception, something that is experienced as directly as a sensory *aisthesis* but should not be read literally as 'seeing.' To say that we can perceive the separation or gap between a book and its redness, for example, does not literally imply a corresponding sensory experience.

[48] This account therefore has some similarities to the disjunctive view of perception, which it will be recalled informs McDowell's similar account on this score (McDowell 1998c, pp. 386-7; cf. *supra*, p. 20). Disjunctivists hold that a veridical perception has a different content to a similar but illusory experience. In my terms, we might say that the direct experience of something as a '*this*' only appears to be the same kind of experience as an illusion in virtue of sharing a grammatical structure, but that such structural similarity conceals the fact that they are different types of experience. If and how the perceiver can tell the difference in spite of such structural similarity is an important question that also extends from this thesis; however, it is one that I will need to leave until another time.

7.3.2 –*Language, Innateness, and Evolution*

in which I deal with the next objection–that Universal Grammar is not evolutionarily plausible– by stressing that the 'innateness' it posits is rather the* potential *to develop spoken language, based on the form of noetic perception I have argued for.

I have argued in this Chapter that *synthesis* and *diairesis* can be explained in naturalistic terms as the operations of Universal Grammar. However, the Chomskyan strategy of approaching linguistics as a natural science ('biolinguistics'[49]), while retaining wide support, remains contentious in some circles, and has been criticised for overlooking the degree to which language is a cultural artefact, with many researchers claiming that it cannot be explained– adequately or at all– in terms of natural selection. Such criticisms also bear upon my thesis, insofar as I have argued that *noesis* is a form of perception, unique to humans, that underwrites language, and which develops rather than being learned– and would therefore be expected to belong to our biological rather than cultural inheritance. In this Section and the next, I will deal with the objection that Universal Grammar is not evolutionarily plausible, to argue that language and the *noesis* that underpins it is an intrinsic part of the human organism. I consider *how* languages could be encoded in the genome, given that natural languages evolve at an exponentially faster rate than living organisms, and have been around for a tiny fraction of evolutionary history. I answer this by stressing it is not *language* that is innate, but the form of noetic perception and the predisposition to *acquire* language which are at issue, and that such phenomena are most plausibly understood as intertwined with our genetic inheritance.

This issue takes its starting point from the disparity between the evolution of natural languages, and the evolution of the language faculty. Natural languages evolve at an astounding rate– modern English, Kurdish, Russian, Hindi, and Venetian have all developed over the past 10,000 years from a single proto-Indo-European language. By contrast, modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) achieved a stable anatomical form around 100,000 years ago, and stable behavioural form around 40-50,000 years ago.[50] This disparity appears to create several problems for an innateness theory of language, since it is unclear how the diversity of human languages can be accounted for by genetic structures that were in place before and that have remained largely unchanged throughout natural language's relatively short but complex history.

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[49] Chomsky 2005, p. 1.
[50] Klein 1995, pp. 168-9.

However, this objection overplays what Universal Grammar claims is innate. It is not natural languages themselves, nor their surface grammars, that are claimed to have a genetic basis, but rather the *predisposition* to learning a natural language– part of which, as I have argued, involves the capacity to *perceive* (vernehmen) the world in a uniquely human way. Such a capacity– as the basis onto which natural languages map– could have evolved far enough back to belong to the common human genetic heritage, and involve structures that underpin *all* natural languages. Indeed, the diversity of natural languages is itself overemphasised in this objection. Baker argues that all natural languages must be "fundamentally commensurable," and, since they are all equally learnable by a child, "must be more similar than they appear."[51] Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch also suggest that our position *within* a particular language leads us to focus more on the differences than the similarities between languages. To a Martian scientist, they claim, the structural similarities between human languages would be much more obvious than their differences.[52]

Baker argues that what is innate in humans is the knowledge of 'parameters,' the basic elements and rules of combination of all natural languages.[53] He compares such parameters analogically to atoms. Just as all matter is comprised of different combinations of atoms, so all natural languages are comprised of different arrangements of parameters.[54] Furthermore, just as atoms combine following fixed laws that reflect their structure– sodium, for example, readily combines with chlorine, but not with tin– neither do parameters combine in a purely arbitrary way. Baker presents linguistic evidence to argue that, despite the diversity of natural languages at the spoken level, they are rather fixed at the parameter level. For example, while different languages have different ways of combining subjects, verbs, and objects to create meaning in sentences (English has a strict subject-verb-object structure– 'Paul saw the mule'– where Latin has a more flexible structure that relies on case markings– 'Paulus mulum spectat' is equivalent to 'Mulum Paulus spectat'), whichever mode they employ has quite regular consequences for the way pre- or post-positions are then employed in that language.[55] Similarly, an analysis of the grammatical divergences in otherwise very similar Romance languages shows that, although such languages contain enough variables that there could be up to sixty-four differing kinds of

[51] Baker 2001, p. 14.
[52] Hauser *et al.* 2002, p. 1569.
[53] Baker 2001, p. 19.
[54] *Ibid*, p. 23.
55 *Ibid*, pp. 30-1.

Romance language, in actuality they fall into two kinds.[56] Both of these findings indicate that natural languages rely on a fixed structure at some underlying level, and support Chomsky's proposal that "all differences among languages are to be thought of... as different choices that languages make with respect to a finite number of parameters."[57]

The innateness in question, therefore, refers rather to a brain that is wired to pick up language. Jackendoff lists seven reasons why we should associate language with the brain structure and development, including, as I have already mentioned, the critical period of language acquisition and the limited ability of apes to acquire anything resembling true language, but also the grammatical parallels in both acquisition and aphasia across spoken and signed languages, and language deficits associated with genetic conditions.[58] Although none of the observations he lists are indefeasible on their own, taken *en masse*, "they offer an overwhelming case for some degree of specialisation for language learning in children."[59] Since the first stirrings of language acquisition begin at such a young age, they must be embodied in the physical and genetic structure of the human body. That we cannot currently explain in detail how this occurs, Jackendoff argues, should not distract us from such otherwise compelling evidence.

> It is premature to reject the hypothesis of Universal Grammar, as some have, arguing that we don't know how genes could code for language acquisition. After all, we don't know how genes code for birdsong or sexual behaviour or sneezing, either, but we don't deny that there is a genetic basis behind these.[60]

As Dennett points out, to argue that a capacity has a genetic basis is not to argue for a deterministic picture that avoids the role of learning and culture, and he warns against a simplistic picture of 'gene *x* creates trait *x*' that ignores the "winding road" of how such a gene is instantiated and expressed.[61]

> Universal grammar doesn't need to be written down as rules to be consulted. It is partly embodied in the architecture, and partly fixed by culturally evolved attractors

56 *Ibid*, p. 43.
57 *Ibid*, p. 44.
58 Jackendoff 2003, pp. 653-4.
59 *Ibid*, p. 654.
60 *Ibid*, p. 653.
61 Dennett 2003, p. 674.

homed-in on by individual learning.[62]

That is to say, recognising the role of culture in language acquisition does not rule out the innateness hypothesis, nor vice versa. This leads us into a second question, about the role of culture in the evolution of language and in language acquisition. As we will see below, an increasing body of work argues that language cannot be explained by natural selection alone, but emphasises the pressures to communicate as playing a key role in shaping language to our brains, rather than the other way around. However, I will argue in the next Section that such accounts overlook the way that humans have co-evolved into our culture– that 'second nature' is the niche in which the language faculty has developed.

7.3.3 – *Cultural Co-Evolution*

in which I argue that the language faculty co-evolved with human culture, and that our shared cultural world provides the evolutionary niche in which language can develop.

In this Section, I explore a second question that asks about the role of culture in both the evolution of language and in the individual subject's acquisition of natural languages. In particular, I note that an increasingly influential research programme takes language itself to be a cultural artefact that was developed specifically for communication, and that has adapted to the human brain/mind. However, I will argue that, as my account of *Bildung* and second nature suggests, a strict dualism of nature and culture is not a useful way of understanding human beings. To say that language evolved under the influence of cultural pressures is not to rule out a genetic basis. Rather, we should say that the second natural space of *noûs* is itself the niche in which both the language faculty and natural languages themselves evolved, and that their evolution was only possible with the co-evolution of the noetic perception of things *as* things.

My argument in this Chapter is that language is underwritten by a grammatically-structured form of perception that I called *noesis*. As such, the perceptual element of language– the capacity to take something *as* 'this'– is logically prior to its communicative aspect. In the previous Sections, I compared this to the theory of Universal Grammar, which posits an innate knowledge of the parameters that organise natural languages. However, where such knowledge and the associated perception of *noûs* may be *logically* prior to communication, I will argue in this

62 *Ibid*, p. 673.

Section that their manifestation– both at the level of individual development and in the evolution of the species– involves a process of triggering and co-evolution within the socio-cultural dimension of human life.

On the individual level, the influence of the environment should not be seen as a counterargument to the innateness theory, but rather as support for it. As I argued in the previous Section, what is innate are not rigid, grammatical rules but rather a *predisposition* to acquire language through an inborn sensitivity to linguistic parameters. For this predisposition to be actualised, a human individual must be exposed to the right cues, as evidenced by the failure of children to fully acquire grammatical language if they are not exposed to it during the 'critical period' of early life. Significantly, such critical periods are also present in songbirds, and are an example of the way many young animals are tuned into specific features of their environment.[63] Such stimuli– termed 'releasers' by ethologists– are widespread in the animal kingdom.[64] Turkey chicks, for example, when exposed to the slow-moving silhouette of a short-necked bird (typical of birds of prey), react by hiding, although they do not react to long-necked shadows, nor to short-necked shadows moving backwards.[65] Cock-robins are well-known for acting aggressively towards any stimulus coloured red– the colour of their rivals. As well as drawing out behaviour in concrete situations, such releasers also serve as aids in a young animal's development. For example, bunting chicks have been shown to be sensitive to the rotation of the night sky, which in later life aids migration by attuning them to the North Star.[66]

Releasers tend to be incredibly species-specific. Fitch notes that young songbirds have a disposition to learn not just birdsong, but the song of their *own* species.[67] He also (with Hauser and Chomsky) notes that young songbirds respond to instances of their species' song with a “subsong” or “babbling” that serves as an aid to acquisition, and notes some direct parallels with human development.[68] And indeed, Mattingly has shown evidence that human phonemes serve as releasers for infants.[69] Human infant babbling can therefore be seen as a response to language, marking the acquisition of linguistic behaviour.[70] Of crucial importance to my account, however, is that human

63 Hauser *et al.* 2002, p. 1572.
64 Lorenz 1973, pp. 14, 21-31.
65 Tinbergen 1948, pp. 34-5.
66 Sauer & Emlen 1971, p. 459.
67 Fitch 2008, p. 522.
68 Hauser *et al.* 2002, p. 1572.
69 Mattingly 1972, p. 328.
70 Petitto & Marentette 1991, p. 1495.

babbling is not geared simply towards parroting sounds, but shows a growing awareness of linguistic elements. As Guasti notes, deaf infants engage in "manual babbling" at the same age as hearing infants begin babbling vocally, thereby suggesting that

> Humans are born with special sensitivity not to sounds, per se, but to the particular units, structures, and regularities found in natural language, regardless of the modality of expression.[71]

All of this suggests that language is innate in the sense that humans are wired up to be sensitive to the elements of language, which in turn act as releasers prompting their further development. For this reason, Chomsky offers the analogy of puberty, stating that

> Language learning is not really something that the child does; it is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment, much as the child's body grows and matures in a predetermined way when provided with appropriate nutrition and environmental stimulation.[72]

A more accurate comparison, however, would be to the *behavioural* changes of puberty, as these are changes which– while having biochemistry at their root– are pushed into their specific manifestations by culture, such that the individual comes to interpret the world in a different way. And in this respect, we might even argue that language acquisition shows *less* cultural influence than puberty, since the rites of initiation into adulthood and the gender roles and responsibilities these entail– not to mention expressions of sexuality– show far more variation across cultures than the patterns of language acquisition. The influence of culture, therefore, should be seen as intrinsically bound together with genetic expression in the development of human qualities, including language.

In making a similar point, Christiansen and Chater have, however, used cultural influence on language development as an argument *against* Universal Grammar. They argue that language is easily learnable by infants "not because our brains embody knowledge of language, but because language has adapted to our brains. "[73]

71 Guasti 2002, p. 47.
72 Chomsky 1988, p. 134.
73 Christiansen & Chater 2008, p. 490.

They argue that

> If linguistic conventions change more rapidly than genes change via natural selection, then genes that encode biases for particular conventions will be eliminated– because, as the language changes, the biases will be incorrect, and, hence, decrease fitness.[74]

A constantly evolving language provides a "moving target" for natural selection, and so Christiansen and Chater argue that we need to explain language acquisition in non-genetic terms. They also consider the parallels between the human infant's acquisition of language and the bunting chick's discovery of the North Star, but reject this is an example of a "circularity trap," where "the genetic endowment of UG is proposed to explain language universals [and] so it cannot be assumed that the language universals pre-date the emergence of the genetic basis for UG."[75]

However, Fitch has criticised this notion of a 'circularity trap' as overlooking one of Darwin's key insights. Evolution does not move towards some final form, but is an ongoing process in a dynamic environment; "today's 'effects,'" he writes, "are tomorrow's 'causes.'"[76] Similarly, Barrett and colleagues note that adaptation to 'moving targets' is "the norm rather than the exception in biology."[77] Furthermore, we should keep in mind that the innateness hypothesis is concerned only with the *predisposition* to language, and that the only knowledge claimed to be innate is those of parameters– which do not change– not particular languages– which do. Indeed, as Baker notes, it is through shared parameters that languages *can* evolve so rapidly, since all that changes in the shift from, for example, Sanskrit to Urdu are the surface expressions, not the underlying 'atoms' of language.[78]

Smith and Kirby, however, take the same strong view as Christiansen and Chater, arguing that it is language *itself*, rather than speakers, that adapts to be learnable, holding that "compositionality can… be explained as a cultural adaptation *by language*."[79] That is, the equal ease with which children acquire Portuguese, Talian, or Pirahã is to be explained not in terms of an innate awareness of parameters, but in that the languages themselves have undergone an evolutionary process that has

74 *Ibid*, p. 493.
75 *Ibid*, pp. 495, 493.
76 Fitch 2008, p. 522.
77 Barrett *et al.* 2008, p. 511.
78 Baker 2002, pp. 44-5.
79 Smith & Kirby 2008, pp. 3594-5.

'selected' them for their ease of acquisition. In some respects, these thinkers are at cross-purposes with the linguists quoted above, and are concerned more with the cultural emergence of linguistic structure than with the biological evolution of language; [80] they are looking at the cultural, surface structure, rather than the underlying mental nature. However, their conclusions have implications for the account I have been defending, as they exemplify a research programme that rejects a view of language as an essential and innate faculty of the human animal, emphasising it rather as a cultural artefact or 'tool' developed by humans.

These thinkers are right to emphasise the socio-cultural pressures under which language evolved. However, to see it merely as a tool is to overlook the other cognitive gaps between humans and animals that come together with language, and which are better explained by a shared grounding in a faculty of noetic or conceptual perception. To say that language is merely instrumental is to overlook the way in which it connects us to the world. For example, proponents of this view base many of their theories on computer models, which explore the probabilities of hypothetical languages being passed on based on their putative learnability.[81] The problem with such modelling, however, is that it is necessarily simplified and highly idealised, exploring language as a self-contained series of patterns, rather than something which links agents to the world. These models take language as simply an organisation of information, which is then examined in terms its efficient reproducibility. As such, they are subject to similar criticisms as those Dreyfus has made of artificial intelligence. [82] While computers are excellent at finding patterns *within* languages, they are unable to tell us much about how such patterns carry meaning, and whether or not a language is easy to pass on tells us little about its role in linking an agent to the world.

Even some experimental work in this field that does not rely heavily on computer models is subject to similar criticisms. Verhoef and her colleagues, for example, explored compositionality by teaching subjects an artificial language constructed by 'phonemes' comprised of slide-whistle tones, in order to chart its evolution in the laboratory.[83] Once again, however, the 'language' here was highly simplified and the findings speak only of the efficiency of certain forms of pattern recognition and reproduction, rather than language's representational role. Since such artificial 'languages' have only a basic syntax and no semantics, they are unable to represent

80 Tamariz & Kirby 2016, p. 37.
81 E.g., Christiansen & Chater 2008, pp. 493-4; Carr *et al*. 2016, pp. 11-2.
82 Dreyfus 1992, p. 110-1.
83 Verhoef *et al.* 2014, p. 59.

the complex interplay of grammatical categories that emerge at the surface level as nouns, verbs, and so on. The non-arbitrary positioning of these syntactic items relative to one another in natural languages has a critical semantic significance, and the rapid appreciation of this by language-acquiring infants is more completely explained by Universal Grammar's theory of parameters.

Furthermore, Verhoef and her colleagues' experiment, like others associated with this research programme, was conducted on adults who were already fluent in a natural language. The skills used in such experiments, then, are more analogous to those involved in learning a second language– involving explicit reasoning and drawing of correspondences– and it is therefore questionable whether such experiments even invoke the same processes involved in first language acquisition. While such experiments are nevertheless useful in showing how certain organisations of phonetic elements are easily and efficiently learnable, they are by their designers' own admission more concerned with the surface structures of natural languages than they are with language's underlying relation to the world.[84] We should therefore take them as valuable insights into the way cultural pressures shape surface structures, yet they do not provide convincing reasons to abandon the innateness hypothesis as I have outlined it here.

Of course, I have been stressing in this Section that the innateness hypothesis nevertheless retains a lot of scope for culture to shape the direction of language without denying its genetic basis. For example, Dor and his colleagues also argue that "changes in society and culture must have played a central role in the entire process" of language evolution.[85] With Jablonka, he compares the changes in the human that led to the development of language to those of the mole rat, whose behavioural change of burrowing underground created a new niche in which selection then continues.[86] However, they also interestingly note the co-evolution of social play– especially pretend play and pantomiming– with episodic memory and analogical thinking, all of which are "crucial for the evolution of language."[87] I have also noted in previous Chapters that all of these phenomena mark the development of *noesis*, and the entry into second natural space, as all crucially involve the apprehension of abstract, apophantic-'*this*'es that can be separated and recombined with their properties. Once

84 Tamariz & Kirby 2016, p. 37.
85 Dor *et al*. 2014, p. 2.
86 Dor & Jablonka 2014, p. 22.
87 *Ibid*, p. 26.

again, this suggests that language is not an artefact put to use purely for communication, but is fundamentally grounded in a unique way of perceiving the world.

The crucial point of this Section is that the question of whether language evolved as an innate expression of the human genome or in response to cultural pressures should not be reduced to an either/or dichotomy. The evolution of natural language is not a question of chickens and eggs, but the story of the refinement of a communicative system in response to the development of a linguistic faculty. My claim throughout the second part of this thesis has been that this linguistic faculty presupposes and is underwritten by a conceptual-perceptual faculty that I have called *noûs*. As the capacity to take things *as* things, *noesis* creates a new space, a second natural space of reasons. This space forms the biological 'niche' in which Universal Grammar has fully evolved.

There is some overlap here with the conception of a 'Faculty of Language– broad (FLB)' that Hauser, Chomsky and Fitch suggest comprises conceptual-intentional and sensory-motor abilities which they propose we may share with non-human animals, and which is contrasted with the 'Faculty of Language- narrow (FLN)' that they claim is exclusively human and identify with recursion (Merge).[88] I am open to the possibility that *noûs*– as a potential element of FLB– may be shared with some other animals as a form of 'taking-as'; to paraphrase Collins, if dolphins and chimps have *noesis* "to some extent, then to that extent they can go on the human side."[89] However, we have also seen throughout this thesis that *noûs* is bound up with other uniquely human traits such as episodic memory, declarative pointing, pantomiming, and *apophansis*. This suggests, therefore, a closer fit with language than its being merely one part of a broader faculty. *Noûs* is best understood, then, a faculty of grammatically-structured conceptual perception that underpins natural language.

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88 Hauser *et al*., pp. 1570-1.
89 Collins 2009, p. 77.

7.3.4 – *The Shared World*

in which I argue that grounding language in perception does not imply internalism, since we develop noetic perception within a shared, cultural world

I have been arguing that language is underlain by *noesis*, and therefore that the perceptual element of language– the capacity to take something *as* '*this*'– is logically prior to its communicative aspect, although I have also argued that the development of both aspects are intertwined, both in the individual's *Bildung* and in the evolutionary life of the species. It may be objected, however, that to ground the communicative element of language in the perceptual smacks of internalism, implying that perception is a private event to which the symbols of language are attached. Since Wittgenstein's 'private language argument,' however, internalism about language has been something of a fringe view in analytic philosophy, while Heidegger's account of 'being-in-the-world' is frequently read as a strong parallel in the continental tradition to Wittgenstein in this respect.[90]

There therefore seems to be a tension between my invocation of Heidegger, among others, and my use of Chomsky. Chomsky, after all, described an early version of his research programme as 'Cartesian linguistics,' and Chomskyan linguists continue to argue that they are concerned with an *I*-language rather than an *E*-language, that is, an 'intensional' rather than 'extensional,' language, concerned with the relations within the speaker's mind rather than the actual words they use.[91] Nevertheless, as we have seen, Chomsky considers the language faculty to be part of the biological endowment of the human, and in my account of *noesis* I have argued that it the language faculty is grounded in this innate (albeit developed) form of perception.

This very innateness should already warn against an internalist reading of my account. To say that a trait is innate is to say that it is rooted in a creature's biological makeup, and since all specimens of a species are embodied in the same way, they should all be expected to encounter the world in largely the same way, too. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, a central element in Heidegger's refutation of Cartesianism is the sense in which 'being-in-the-world' is always a 'being-with-[Others],' something he asserts is maintained by language (in the sense of *Rede*).[92] The mere fact that we exist

90 Wittgenstein 2009, pp. 98ff. (§256 onwards, most famously §293); Esfeld 2001, p. 46. See also, for example, Malpas' (2011, pp. 268-9) linking of Heidegger with Davidson's externalism.
91 Chomsky 1966, p. 29; Baker 2001, pp. 54-5.
92 Heidegger 1962, p. 204; *supra*, pp. 169. Cf. *supra*, p. 109.

within the same species on the same planet guarantees such an enormous number of shared experiences that it takes an effortful suspension of disbelief to count individual experiences as 'private' (although, as I will consider in the next and final Section, to the extent that our knowledge is mediated by concepts and culture, a space does open for some divergence between how we and others take a situation or phenomenon, although I will argue that the role of culture still stands against calling such divergences 'private').

This essentially social dimension of the human being also suggests how even the perceptual element of *noesis* is not strictly private. As I also noted earlier, while Chomsky has hinted at a sympathy towards the view that the language faculty may have evolved in a single individual, this overlooks the crucial role of intersubjective awareness in *noesis*, insofar as we initially always point *for others*.[93] I have suggested throughout Part Two that *noesis* is an innate capacity, not in the sense that we are born with it, but that we develop it through the process of *Bildung*, our initiation into language and culture. In the previous Section, I noted the way that many innate animal traits develop only in response to the appropriate triggers or 'releasers,' and suggested that the development of language is a prime example of this, evidenced particularly by the necessity to be exposed to it during a 'critical period.' Furthermore, in the previous Chapter I described the overlap of *noesis* with declarative pointing, and noted its correlation with the first stirrings of language acquisition, arguing that the *Bildung* described by McDowell is not merely the learning of linguistic and cultural facts, but describes a distinct and crucial phase of our biological and psychological development. The 'critical period' shows that we are dependent on others as 'releasers' of this process. That is to say, *noesis* is activated– 'released'– by our pointing interactions with our caregivers. *We point for others*, as others point things out for us. These early pointing interactions draw our awareness to objects frozen out of context, apophantically-'*as*' a '*this*.'

Hinzen has argued that the 'space of reasons' in which thought takes place is a “deictic space” that is formed within the triangle of the grammatical first-, second-, and third-persons.[94] This space is opened up by the act of pointing– *I* (first person) point *it* (third person) out to *you* (second person). The act of deictic triangulation forms an intersubjective space formed of subject, object and other; it is an essentially shared space, where meaning (and truth) are affirmed in the act of communication. This

93 Cf. *supra*, p. 169.
94 Hinzen 2014, p. 245.

conception of triangulation has strong parallels to Davidson's argument for linguistic externalism, which rejects the possibility of a private language on the basis that all meaning comes from a triangle of subject, object, and the intersubjective sharing of both. [95] Significantly, Davidson's account also emphasises the need for such communicating agents to be "very much alike" in their embodiment (or at the very least, in their openness to stimuli).[96]

In this way, we can see that my account of language as based in *noesis*, although personal, does not imply an internalist understanding of its object as something 'private.' Not only do we share our biological sensory-perceptual modalities (*aistheses*) with other humans, but the intellectual-perceptual faculty of *noûs* also forms a part of our biological development as we grow into a socio-cultural world. During our *Bildung* we develop *noûs* through the dynamic process of deictic triangulation. We point for others, and our growing noetic faculty in turn underpins and supports the co-development of natural language. Only by assuming a binary separation of the mind from the body, of the individual from society, and of biology from culture, can my account of *noesis* be taken as internalist. But I reject all three binaries. The embodied human individual is intrinsically a social being whose natural development involves acquiring *noûs* and thereby entering a second natural space of reasons.

However, once we have entered this space– grammatically-structured, as I have argued, though *synthesis* and *diairesis*– we directly experience language and concepts *as entities*. There is a sense, then, in which the objects of our noetic experience– while shared– are dependent for their existence on the socio-linguistic 'world' of our second nature. This linguistic-cultural dependence of conceptual entities seems to imply a form of relativism along the lines posited by the so-called 'Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis, and it is to these implications that I now turn in my final Section.

* * *

95 Davidson 2004, p. 143.
[96] *Ibid*.

7.3.5 – *Concepts, Culture, and Truth*

in which I argue against a strong 'Whorfian hypothesis' of cultural and linguistic relativity, but conclude that language's role in populating our second nature 'world' could be taken as support for a very 'weak' version of the claim.

I have been arguing, along Chomskyan lines, that language is an innate faculty of the human being, albeit one that develops in feedback with the infant's initiation into a culture. The role of culture here creates a tension, as the diversity of human cultures seems to throw into question any universalist claims about human cognition. At its most extreme, an emphasis on language and culture's influence over cognition implies a cultural or linguistic relativism of the type expressed by the so-called 'Sapir-Whorf' or 'Whorfian' hypothesis, which in its strongest form asserts that different linguistic and cultural communities hold different and perhaps incommensurable worldviews in virtue of their linguistic differences, and that the grammatical structure of languages influences the kind of thoughts that speakers can (and cannot) think.

In this Section, I will argue that the role I have granted to culture and grammar in this thesis does not imply a strong version of the Whorfian hypothesis. While I will argue that language affects thoughts, and that surface grammars may focus speakers' attention onto particular aspects of experience, nothing in my account supports a strong Whorfian claim of cultural incommensurability. However, my account of *Bildung*, together with the account of post-conceptuality from Chapter Four, does suggest the way in which our initiation into a world, through Naming and through acquiring and learning to use new words, enables us to think new concepts within an abstract space of reasons, and thus could be said to support a weak version of the Whorfian hypothesis, in the sense that entities we encounter would have different significances or none to someone who had not been initiated into our culture. Such a conclusion is reflective of the way my account of conceptual and non-/post-conceptual experience applies not only (or even principally) to bodily skills, but also to cognitive activities such as perception, speaking, and even thinking.

The 'Sapir-Whorf' or 'Whorfian hypothesis' is a name commonly given to theories of linguistic and cognitive relativity, since most modern, scientific articulations of the idea trace themselves to the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf, who developed and published theories strongly influenced by his teacher, the anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir.[97] Whorf called his hypothesis the "linguistic relativity principle," and

[97] Carroll 2012, pp. 19-22. The idea of linguistic relativism is of course very old, but prior to the

its central idea was that "users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars towards different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation."[98] The central theme of his academic and popular writing is that a culture's worldview is shaped by the structure of its language. In his strongest terms, for example, he states:

> We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we don't find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscope flux of impressions which has to be organised by our minds– and this means largely by the linguistic systems of our minds. We cut up nature, organise it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organise it in this way... we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organisation and classification of data which the agreement decrees...[99]

> We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated.[100]

Gentner and Goldin-Meadow summarise the basic Whorfian hypothesis as an observation that languages vary in their semantic partitioning of world, plus an argument that the structure of language influences the manner in which one perceives and understands the world, and thus leads to a conclusion that speakers of different languages will perceive the world differently.[101]

From Whorf's various statements, Lenneberg has distilled two formalised Whorfian hypotheses:

> 1. Structural differences between language systems will, in general, be paralleled by non-linguistic cognitive differences, of an unspecified sort, between the native speakers of the two languages.

> 2. The structure of anyone's native language strongly influences or fully determines

twentieth century it had a tendency to be expressed in Romantic or in culturally-chauvinist terms. Both Sapir and Whorf were distinctive in their (albeit imperfect) application of linguistic evidence to support what they took to be an objective conclusion.

98 Whorf 2012b, pp. 282-3.
99 Whorf 2012a, p. 272.
100 *Ibid*, p. 274.
101 Gentner & Goldin-Meadow 2003, p. 4.

> the world-view he will acquire as he learns the language.[102]

Brown in turn notes that we can read these hypotheses in either a 'weak form'– that there exists "a correlation between linguistic structure and cognition"– or in a much stronger form– that there is "a causal developmental relation" between the language one speaks and the kind of thoughts that one can think, and how one perceives the world.

Lakoff emphasises that Whorf's view is not the oft-attributed notion that different languages form incommensurable worldviews. [103] For Whorf, Lakoff argues, conceptual systems can be *radically* different, but not *totally* different.[104] Indeed, similarly to my own argument against internalism in the previous Section, Whorf holds that the similarity of our bodies as members of the same species implies a general shared experience with other human beings.[105] And Whorf also tempers the strongest readings of his hypothesis, saying for example that

> language, for all its kingly role, is in some sense a superficial embroidery upon deeper processes of consciousness, which are necessary before any communication, signalling, or symbolism whatsoever can occur.[106]

Nevertheless, Whorf's work has inspired continuing debates over the interrelation of language, culture, and thought, and the strong reading has come to epitomise one of the poles in the question over whether the source of our conceptual system is innate or cultural. This appears to raise a tension within my account, since Levinson has argued that the opposite pole is epitomised by Chomsky, whose universalist view is "diametrically opposed" to Whorf's.[107] Therefore, one might object that my defence of a Chomskyan account, whereby language is understood as an innate and essential element of the human organism, is incompatible with the extent to which I have emphasised culture in the previous Sections. However, as Gopnik has noted, although Chomsky himself played down cultural differences in order to focus on underlying linguistic structures,

> neo-Chomskyans tend to see cognitive structure itself as innate rather than developed

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[102] Brown 1976, p. 128.
[103] Lakoff 1987, p. 328.
[104] *Ibid*.
[105] Whorf 2012a, pp. 267-8
[106] Whorf 2012c, pp. 306-7.
[107] Levinson 2012, p. *xi*.

> or constructed [but] more significantly, they see cognition as a necessary but not sufficient condition for semantic development... merely having a cognitive representation of the world doesn't determine one's semantic representations.[108]

In what follows, then, I will argue that the observation that language plays a role in structuring thought does not imply the strong Whorfian claim that different cultures thereby inhabit radically different worlds. Indeed, my account of post-conceptuality offers a potential argument *against* the strong Whorfian hypothesis insofar as, having acquired a particular surface grammar, it becomes invisible to us in our everyday dealings, and the aspects of experience that it encodes are no less accessible to speakers of different languages. Nevertheless, I will argue that this same account of post-conceptuality supports a weak Whorfian hypothesis to the extent that, since we experience the cultural entities we discover through language *as things*, differences in languages do directly affect our perception of the world, although this has more to do with lexicon than grammar.

7.3.5.1 – *Grammar and Culture*

in which I explore the effects of surface grammar on cognition, and argue that, although differences in such grammars may make certain aspects of the world more salient, they do not open up or close off aspects of experience.

There are two broad ways in which language might be said to expand or constrain human thought. The first is via its grammatical structure. The second is by its lexicon. In this subsection I will look at arguments for how a language's grammar might structure its speakers' perceptual and conceptual experience of the world. It should be noted that the sense of 'grammar' in play here is the surface grammar of natural languages, and not the Universal Grammar (or capacity for *synthesis*/*diairesis*) that I earlier argued underpins such surface grammars. For this reason, a strong Whorfian thesis would not necessarily be incompatible with my argument that human language is underpinned by an innate, developing, grammatical mode of perception. My universalist claim is a minimal one, committed only to the theses that language is innate, and that Universal Grammar enables abstract thought through Merge. It is therefore an empirical question whether or not surface grammars give rise to different forms of thought, as suggested by the strong Whorfian hypothesis, and I will present evidence below that has been interpreted as doing so. Nevertheless, I will argue against such interpretations, and show that my theory of post-conceptuality applied

[108] Gopnik 2001, p. 50.

to language-use actually offers reason to prefer, at most, a weaker, commensurist reading.

The strong Whorfian hypothesis locates the source of cultural incommensurability in a language's (surface) grammar, as this element of language– unlike the lexicon– is shared by the entire speech community, and is also in a sense 'hidden' from most speakers, in that we use grammar reflexively and unthinkingly– not insignificantly, in the way we use acquired bodily skills. Whorfians emphasise the subtle ways in which grammar focuses our thought onto certain aspects of experience, a feature of language admitted even by Pinker, who has been highly critical of the Whorfian hypothesis.[109]

Perhaps the most commonly-cited influence of grammar on perception is that of gender. Unlike English, many languages class words as belonging to a particular gender. It should be noted that 'gender' here does not technically have any sexual connotations, and is closely related to the terms 'genre' and 'genus' in referring to things of a 'type' or 'kind.' Most Indo-European languages have two or at most three genders, with the result that grammatical genders have tended to be named as 'masculine' and 'feminine,' with 'neuter' as a third. Nouns in gendered languages are assigned to genders as a matter of convention, whose origin has long been lost but which should not be assumed to be primarily sexual; hence, Mark Twain's oft-cited complaint that in German 'young girl' (*das Mädchen*) is neuter while 'turnip' (*die Rübe*) is female is misplaced. Some non-European languages have even more genders. Lakoff notes that Dyirbal has four distinct genders, including one (*balam*) for 'non-flesh food' and another (*balan*) for 'women, fire, and dangerous things.'[110]

Speaking a gendered language correctly requires the speaker to know the gender of each word they use. This can sometimes force speakers to make an explicit choice, in cases where a word's grammatical gender contradicts some property the speaker wants to express and attribute to the object. For example, Hunt and Agnoli point out that an Italian speaker must refer to a bear (*orso*) as masculine, and must therefore consciously choose to specify the sex if they want to talk specifically about a female bear (*orsa*).[111] However, we should not presume the extent to which this is a property of the language or some other cultural factor. In genderless English, for example, it remains common to speak of a 'she-bear' or 'she-wolf,' and likewise of a 'tomcat'

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109 Pinker 2007, pp. 131-2; 1994, p. 61.
110 Lakoff 1987, p. 93.
111 Hunt & Agnoli 1991, p. 382.

(although the decline of such terms– especially those referring to humans, such as 'lady doctor'– suggests cultural factors play a greater role than linguistic properties). Indeed, in learning to speak a gendered language, it is not clear that speakers are encouraged to make explicit associations between objects in the same gender. The gender marker (usually an article or declensional suffix) is learned together with the noun, such that the speaker automatically expresses the gender, without any explicit reasoning.

Grammatical phenomena are of course not limited to genders, sexual or otherwise. Boroditsky and her colleagues list several of the elements that speakers of different languages are obliged to express.[112] In the phrase 'the elephant ate the peanuts,' for example, an English speaker is obliged to express the past tense. A Mandarin speaker, on the other hand, would not need to. A Russian speaker would have to express not only the tense but the (grammatical) gender of the elephant, and whether he ate all the peanuts or only some of them. A Turkish speaker, finally, would not only be obliged to express the past tense, but in doing so would need to express whether they personally witnessed the elephant eat the peanuts, or whether it was something they learned second-hand.

The issue with Boroditsky's claim, however, is that it is difficult to argue that such features are not a universal part of human experience, regardless of whether or not one's language obliges one to reveal it. That is, just because we are not obliged to express something does not imply we are not aware of it. A Mandarin-speaker, if questioned further, would have no trouble saying 'when' the elephant ate the peanuts; an English-speaker, if challenged, could confidently declare whether they saw the elephant eat the peanuts or merely heard about it. Thus, the Turkish-speaker's grammar does not seem to give them any special privileges. Indeed, as I noted in the previous Chapter, the fluent use of language is achieved in a manner like smooth coping. The Turkish-speaker, in an ordinary conversation, would probably not be aware of using the definite past (first-person-eyewitness) tense, any more than an English-speaker would be aware of using the simple past tense. The words would simply flow. As Pinker argues,

> It's not even obvious that a lifetime of coding a distinction in language should make the distinction more available in reasoning. It's just as likely the opposite could

[112] Boroditsky *et al*. 2003, p. 61.

> happen. When a thought process becomes automatic, it gets deeply embedded in the language system as a cognitive reflex and its internal workings are no longer consciously available, any more than we have conscious access to the finger motions involved in tying our shoes.[113]

Pinker's point here is essentially another way of phrasing Merleau-Ponty's observation that most of our everyday speech– the *parole parlée*– consists in the recital of automatic, stereotyped phrases.[114] They would only become a part of reflective thought in scenarios analogous to the 'breakdown' of coping– say, for example, if one was trying to lie about having really seen the elephant. In that case, the choice of word and tense would stand out conspicuously to a Turkish-speaker, breaking the flow.[115] And while Lakoff argues that Dyirbal or Hopi speakers need to decide whether something is dangerous, or vibrating, or so on, in actuality, for a fluent speaker the choice has already been made for them.[116] The language itself already encodes which gender an object belongs to, which is learned from infancy by practice and rote. Deliberative thought would not come into it, any more than a German would need to decide whether a noun needs *der*, *die*, or *das*.[117]

One might nevertheless hold that such pre-made choices are precisely the Whorfian point, that a Dyirbal-speaker, for example, cannot *but* think of something *balan* as dangerous. Supporting this, Boroditsky and her colleagues found a strong correlation between gender and perception by comparing two objects (a key and a bridge) that are opposite genders in German and Spanish.[118] They found a strong tendency for speakers of both languages to ascribe stereotypically male adjectives to the masculine object (the key in German and the bridge in Spanish), and stereotypically female adjectives to the feminine object. This offers reasonable evidence for the influence of language over perception, for the stereotyped results offer a counterargument to my above observation on the origins of 'gender.' It appears that, regardless of the term's actual origin, for the ordinary German or Spanish speaker, having learned about gender in sexual terms is sufficient to project that impression onto objects within the entire class.

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113 Pinker 2007, pp. 132-3.
114 Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. 202.
115 A reason, perhaps, why there is such a phenomenological difference between telling a lie and telling the truth, and why an unpractised lie is more easily detected.
116 Lakoff 1987, pp. 319-20.
117 Furthermore, when a German-speaker *does* need to decide which article an unfamiliar word takes, their thought process tends to be 'where have I seen this before?' or 'how does the newspaper do it?' rather than 'does this object seem particularly masculine or feminine?'.
118 Boroditsky *et al*. 2003, pp. 69-71.

Similarly, Gentner and Goldin-Meadow note that Korean uses different prepositions in place of the English 'in' and 'on' and which overlap in different ways, depending on whether the object forms a loose or tight-fit.[119] Korean subjects tended to group objects together along these lines, in contrast to English subjects. Lucy and Gaskins have found parallels in their extensive work with Yucatec-speakers, whose language has genders that relate to the material objects are made from, and thus obliges them to express that in their speech.[120] Experiments conducted on Yucatec- and English-speakers showed an overwhelming tendency for Yucatec-speakers to group objects together based on the material they were made from, while English-speakers had an equally strong tendency to group objects based on shape. These results suggest that languages have a subtle effect on cognition even below the level of explicit awareness, and structure the very way that their speakers carve up the world.

It is therefore plausible that different languages, organising thought in different ways, focus their speakers onto different aspects of experience. Hunt and Agnoli suggest that this is a direct effect of the way languages work by shifting concepts from short- to long-term memory, noting that the fact that Italian sentences are typically longer than English sentences might be explained in terms of the structure of the former, which 'outsources' memory load onto the language-structure itself.[121] Hunt and Agnoli also ponder a correlation between the observation that Chinese languages lack the subjunctive, and that native speakers of those languages tend to do less well at tests of counterfactual reasoning than English speakers.[122] However, such cross-linguistic differences remain, at best, evidence only of a weak form of the Whorfian hypothesis. As Hunt and Agnoli point out, the "issue is not whether Chinese can perform counterfactual reasoning, but whether the relative cost of such reasoning is greater in Chinese than in English."[123] Perhaps most significantly, there has been no evidence put forward that speakers of any language are incapable of acquiring certain concepts as a direct result of the grammar of their native language. As Gopnik notes, differences across languages have more to do with *timing* than with end results.[124] That is, while certain languages may facilitate or prioritise certain forms of thought over others, they can never close off thoughts entirely. Worldviews, says Gopnik, are not

[119] Gentner & Goldin-Meadow 2003, pp. 6-7.
[120] Lucy & Gaskins 2001, pp. 262-3.
[121] Hunt & Agnoli 1991, p. 384.
[122] *Ibid*, p. 386.
[123] *Ibid*.
[124] Gopnik 2001, p. 58.

incommensurable, but *converging*.[125]

In this subsection, I have looked at the effects of surface grammar on cognition. While there is some evidence that the grammar of a natural language leads its speakers to interesting and significant differences in categorisation, this is a far cry from the strong Whorfian hypothesis that posits radically different worldviews to different linguistic communities. As I have argued, the acquisition of language and the use of grammar parallels skill-performance in smooth coping. The aspects of experience that they encode are, therefore, for the most part invisible to the speaker, only arising in cases of breakdown, as when a Turkish-speaker tries to lie about having *really* seen an elephant eat peanuts. Nevertheless, such breakdowns are also possible for speakers of other languages, albeit they may need verbal prompting– on questioning, we can also force an English-speaker to declare whether or not they witnessed a reported event first-hand. Thus, there is no reason to think that elements of experience, while they may be highlighted by particular grammars, are inaccessible to speakers of languages with different grammars. The difference remains one of emphasis, not of necessity.

It should further be stressed that such conclusions have, at any rate, little bearing on my account of *noesis* and Universal Grammar, as this deals with the logically prior capacity to 'carve up' the world– through *synthesis*/*diairesis*, the 'taking-together-that-takes-apart'– at all. The surface grammars discussed here may or may not instantiate this to different degrees– that is an empirical question, and I do not have the space here to review the entire debate. It is nevertheless difficult to conclude that speakers of different surface grammatical systems live in fundamentally different, much less incommensurable, worlds. But as even Pinker was willing to admit, despite whether we think Whorf is wrong to the extent that one's language determines how one conceptualises reality in general, “he was probably correct in a much weaker sense: one's language does determine how one must conceptualise reality when one has to talk about it.”[126]

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[125] *Ibid*.
[126] Pinker 1989, p. 360.

7.3.5.2 – *Words, Concepts, and Things*

in which I explore the interrelation of word and concept acquisition to argue that words are instrumental in populating our shared, second natural 'worlds,' and that these 'worlds' are not therefore shared universally, but differ both within and between linguistic communities.

In this next subsection, I will examine the second feature of language that may be argued to create differences in worldviews across languages– the words themselves. The impact of words on cognition– such as the number of Eskimo words for 'snow'– is both the most widely-known and highly-criticised piece of 'evidence' for Whorf's hypothesis.[127] Pinker notes that Whorf, in drawing upon this example, 'reversed cause and effect,' and exaggerated the extent to which the words created a cognitive difference *between* peoples.[128] However, I will argue in this subsection that our lexicon nevertheless has a significant effect on our experience. Words can not only stand in for concepts, but in the case of many culturally-derived concepts, they *are* the concepts themselves, providing a shorthand for complex concepts that in turn allows the formation of higher order concepts. As I have argued in this and previous Chapters, we experience such verbal and cultural concepts noetically as though they were *things*, and we learn to cope with them, as we do with physical things, post-conceptually. There is, therefore, an important sense in which acquiring concepts– either directly from experience, through Naming, or via new words– populates our second nature worlds with new entities. While, as I argued in the previous Section, such words are never exclusively 'private,' they are nevertheless bound in important ways to our speech community, and could therefore be held to demonstrate an instance of the Whorfian hypothesis, but again only in a weak sense; firstly, because there is no in principle reason why such concepts can't be translated across languages, and secondly because such conceptual worlds can differ as much *within* a linguistic community as without it.

Words, as Brown neatly put it, are the "lure to cognition."[129] Pinker argues that, at a minimum, attaching a word to a concept helps retain it in memory, "making it more easily retrievable than ineffable concepts or those with more roundabout verbal descriptions."[130] McDowell concurs, suggesting that our recognitional capacities can be cultivated by improving our conceptual repertoire, as we find with connoisseurs of food and wine, who develop an ability to Name discreet flavours that may be not be

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127 Whorf 2012a, pp. 276-7; Pinker 2007, pp. 125-6.
128 Pinker 2007, p. 126.
129 Brown 1958, pp. 206-7.
130 Pinker 2007, p. 129.

readily discerned by the uninitiated.[131] None of this requires that we need specific *words* to make such discriminations, just that there is a mutual feedback between perceptions and Names. Having the words 'malty' and 'hoppy' gives me ready access to an expression for the experience of certain flavours in beer, as well as something to look for. Yet, bringing my authentic attention to the *moment* of tasting, I should be able to distinguish each flavour minimally as a '*this*' regardless of whether I have tasted it before, or have a name for it or not.

Specific words *do*, however, become valuable in terms of memory and recall. Hunt and Agnoli agree that improvements in vocabulary facilitate the naturalness of thought, arguing, as we have seen, that "languages evolve to move the burden from the short-term to the long-term memory."[132] But they stress that this is something which occurs as much *within* languages as *between* languages, noting developments in surfer slang over the past fifty years. New coinages– specific new meanings for terms such as 'hollow' and 'flat'– allow surfers to make finer discriminations between features of the sea. Having words therefore facilitates recall and recognition, although they do so by sacrificing detail in the process of abstraction. As Tye points out, we do not have "recognitional concepts for minimal shades," citing studies which show that subjects struggle to re-identify specific shades, such as 'red_{27},' in the absence of the original sample.[133] In the absence of the perceptual experience, the conceptual '*this*' of the judgement is just the word or *logos*– that is, whatever is retained of the concept once the specific perception has been stripped away. Supporting this conclusion is Rosch's finding that members of the New Guinean Dani tribe (whose language contains relatively few colour words) were far more successful at re-recognising a colour if it belonged to a group with a word.[134] Thus, even where words facilitate more abstract thought, they can also involve a movement away from direct experience. The '*this*' that I think, remember, and speak of– the *logos*– is not the *'this*' that I actually perceive.

This highlights a gap between experience and the *logos*. A young child need not understand the concept 'shade' to noetically pick out two kinds of red, just as a speaker

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131 McDowell 1994, p. 57, n. 14.
132 Hunt & Agnoli 1991, p. 378.
133 Tye 2006, p. 520. See Halsey & Chapanis (1951) for the original study. Brown (1976, p. 129-137) has noted that there may also be a physiological basis to colour recognition, showing that subjects across cultures are more successful at attaching names to 'prototypical' colours than to colours that fall between those groups.
134 Rosch 1973, pp. 348-9.

of a language that does not differentiate between 'red' and 'orange' can still noetically 'tell' the difference between them.[135] Where words become important is rather in enhancing our abstract recognitional capacities. For example, Winawer and his colleagues have shown that native Russian-speakers, who have two distinct colour words, *goluboy* and *siniy*, for what in English are considered two shades of blue, have a faster and more accurate ability to discriminate between colours across those categories than within them.[136] That language played a key role was further supported by the fact that the Russian-speakers lost their advantage over the native English-speakers if they were distracted by 'verbal interference' during the task.[137] Similarly, Roberson and her colleagues have reported that the Himba-speakers of south-west Africa, lacking distinct words for 'blue' and 'green,' are generally unsuccessful at distinguishing between blue and green colour chips, although they are much more successful than English-speakers at discriminating between two shades of 'green' for which they possess different words.[138]

Thus, language and *noesis*– Naming '*this*'– play a role in structuring and organising thought, through a process of abstracting it away from direct experience. I argued in Chapter One that through the act of Naming something– as a tree, as a eucalypt, as a black gum– we are able to refine our perception. I argued there that to Name need not involve natural language; it is linguistic only in the sense that it is structured grammatically, in the way I have argued in this Chapter. To Name is to perceive noetically, to see something *as* something, *as* a '*this*'– that is, as a *concept*. As Siegel notes, when we acquire the concept of something new– of a pine tree, in her example– it is not merely the case that we have acquired a new belief.[139] The forest itself now actually *looks* different– we can *see* the pine trees, *as* pine trees.[140]

This perceptual capacity follows the same conceptual-to-post-conceptual pattern as skill acquisition, and rests on the same capacity to carve up the world grammatically

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135 Thus the oft-cited claim that Homeric Greeks could not tell the difference between the colour of the 'wine dark' sea and a *kylix* of wine is misplaced.

136 Winawer *et al.* 2007, pp. 7783-4.

137 *Ibid*, pp. 7781, 7783.

138 Roberson *et al*. 2005, pp. 402-3.

139 Siegel 2006, p. 491.

140 It is important to note that the change in perception is brought about by the acquisition of a concept and not of a belief or some other attitude, which are properly understood as relationships between concepts. For example, no matter how much we learn about the Müller-Lyer lines, nor how carefully we measure them, they will always *look* to us as being different lengths, irrespective of our beliefs about them. Yet the cases Siegel has in mind are different, and illustrate the way *noûs* changes our perceptual experience of the world along the same lines as we acquire a skill.

(*synthesis* and *diairesis*). Consider foraging for mushrooms, for example, a trickier and higher-stakes affair than picking out pine trees in a wood. To an untrained eye, a tasty mushroom may not look at all different from a deadly one. To learn the difference, we initially need to carve them up grammatically– *this* colour cap, *this* kind of gills, *this* shaped hood, and so on. As with learning to drive a car, we employ rules and explicit concepts.[141] Yet as we acquire the skill of identification, we no longer consciously attend to the parts, but see the mushroom *as this* kind of mushroom *and not* another, wondering how on earth novices (including our former self) can't see the difference.

This acquisition of a skill, or absorption of the concept, signifies that we are able to *take* the mushrooms post-conceptually. Of course, we may still bring in our reflective, noetic perception– even an expert could be quickly sorting through a basket of mushrooms, and then stop to double-check the gills of an uncertain specimen. Such skill absorption can work to various degrees of fine-grainedness. A novice forager could still go out and pick all the white field mushrooms she sees, identifying them as a class that does not include brown ones or those growing on tree-stumps. This reveals an interesting phenomenological difference between the novice and the expert, for the absorbed concept can now be brought explicitly back into reflection. In stopping to 'take' the specimen 'to heart,' the expert may see it *as* a *Psilocybe*, while the novice merely sees it *as* a mushroom. Yet in this way, both differ from those animals that eat particular species of mushrooms. For them, there are only the edible mushrooms that solicit them hermeneutically-*as* something-to-eat, and are not connected to the inedible species that blend into the background, not as *mushrooms*, but as 'generally inedible stuff.'

Thus Naming– the capacity to carve up the world, to take wholes as their parts, and then together as their wholes– enables us to form more and more complex worlds. Our second nature world, once populated merely by mushrooms, now contains *Psilocybes* and *Panaeoluses*. There is a certainly a cultural element to this– the average Russian's 'world' contains many more types of mushroom than the average Scotsman's, since despite their both living in fungi-rich lands, foraging for mushrooms is a far more popular pastime in Russia than it is in the British Isles. Similarly, Polynesian mariners– who by long experience have Named and learned to recognise features of ocean currents and patterns of waves– perceive the sea

[141] *Supra*, p. 25.

differently to modern Kiwi sailors, who rely on charts and GPS for navigation.[142] Yet such differing perceptions of natural phenomena need not be cross-cultural or even cross-linguistic, as we saw earlier in the case of surfers.

But perhaps the most significant differences between the worlds of different communities comes when those concepts are purely cultural. For the concepts and words we have considered so far– 'slushy snow,' 'malty beer,' 'earthy mushrooms,' 'hollow waves'– are all concepts that are drawn directly from our sensory experience of the physical world. For this reason, perhaps, Pinker dismisses the observation that the "stock of words" reflects things in peoples' lives as "banal."[143] However, this quick dismissal overlooks the extent to which sometimes the words– or the concepts themselves– *are* the *things*. Entities like governments, universities, and theories only exist in virtue of the concepts held and shared by members of a community. As I argued in Chapter Four, even entities like traffic lights only exist *as* traffic lights– with direct causal effects on human beliefs and actions– in virtue of the shared web of social concepts that projects onto them the meaning that they have. Such 'social concepts,' as Lakoff notes, are "made real by human action."[144]

This supports a (weak) Whorfian point that language 'carves up' not just the physical world (into types of snow, types of wave, and so on), but also the cultural worlds that give rise to the words. Chinese languages, for instance, have different words for 'older brother' and 'younger brother.' Such terms most likely developed in tandem with the Confucian value system that stands at the core of Chinese societies, and emphasises the reciprocal responsibilities within hierarchical relationships that include ruler and subject, father and son, older brother and younger brother, and so on. But just as Pinker argued against Whorf's Eskimo snow-word example, such a conclusion most likely reverses the true order of causation if it argues that Confucian culture developed in response to the language. Nevertheless, having such distinct terms within the language should certainly aid in perpetuating the culture by making the relationship explicit in each use of the term. Similarly, the Japanese system of honorifics– in which social etiquette demands the attachment of a distinct, rank-related suffix to the names of all but one's closest family and friends– is both made necessary by and helps to facilitate the complex Japanese social structure. But such a social structure, while

142 Lewis 1978, p. 76.
143 Pinker 2007, p. 127.
144 Lakoff 1987, p. 309.

difficult for outsiders to learn, is certainly not incommensurable across cultures.[145]

Thus, although our earliest concepts may be based only and directly on perception, as soon as we begin to acquire language, we also become open to cultural entities.[146] Carey, for example, although she argues that human conceptuality is rooted in a "core cognition" that is nativist in character, holds that explicit language makes concepts "more salient and robust, more stable" and more likely to be used in further reasoning.[147] Put simply, as we saw Hunt and Agnoli argue earlier, attaching a word to a concept allows us to form a shorthand for a concept that might otherwise take a paragraph to describe.

Thus, language does not simply pick out universal qualities, but rather groups features in accordance with particular cultural worldviews, as Gopnik notes, discussing 'La Rochfoucauld's dictum' that 'no one would fall in love if they hadn't read about it first.'[148] In this example, she says,

> my language may classify together as 'love' a set of emotions– intense manic-depressive phenomenology, sexual attraction, intimacy, common understanding, jealousy, etc.,– that would not be so grouped by another culture, or by our culture at another historical period. Once I and others have interpreted my behaviour and feelings in accordance with this classification, however, usually through the medium of language, then the classification will have genuine predictive and exploratory power.[149]

Gopnik's point is not the depressing conclusion that love does not exist, or that it only exists 'in the mind.' Rather, love *does* exist for us– as twenty-first century English-speakers– because we have been initiated into a shared, cultural space of reasons that interprets *this* group of interrelated and often conflicting emotions as one concept under a single term. Having such a term therefore enables us to think and speak of this concept as though it were a single *thing*– 'our love'– or property– 'they were 'in love'.'

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[145] Indeed, most cultures contain some version of a '*tu-vous*' or 'familiar-polite' distinction in the language, and even those– such as English– which don't still encourage distinct forms of speech between formal and informal settings.
[146] Lucy & Gaskins 2001, p. 280.
[147] Carey 2009, p. 212.
[148] Gopnik 2001, p. 65.
[149] *Ibid*, pp. 65-6.

Such concepts of course draw on long, historical traditions– our concept of romantic love, for example, can be traced to the medieval troubadours and the ideas of courtly love that challenged the pre-existing conception of marriage as a transaction between families– and as such, it may be argued that such concepts are culturally-incommensurable in a Whorfian sense, insofar as languages and cultures may carve up the world in ways that have such little overlap that the concepts of one language-culture cannot be translated into the terms of another.

Such a view is, however, unduly pessimistic. While it is indeed true that many concepts expressed by a single word in one language cannot be translated into a single word in another language, it does not follow that the concept cannot be described. For example, the Nguni Bantu noun '*ubuntu*' describes a complex quality of human-ness or humane-ness that takes the individual as inextricably linked to the community, and embodies qualities not only of generosity, friendliness and hospitality, but an identification with the other that includes a pride in their achievements and pain at their suffering.[150] *Ubuntu* can be exemplified, for example, in the image of a traveller arriving at a village and being welcomed in as one of its own. Where no English equivalent seems to capture this sentiment exactly, it is nevertheless understandable, and examples of *ubuntu* abound in our own culture, perhaps most notably in the Scottish tradition of 'highland hospitality.'

Similarly, the German word *Sehnsucht* denotes a particular sense of yearning that, for example, as in Schiller's poem of that name, seems to describe a homesickness for a place that does not exist.[151] C.S. Lewis described the word as denoting an "inconsolable longing," an "unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction."[152] Lewis' expression shows that the term is not untranslatable, although Scheibe and her colleagues note that *Sehnsucht* differs subtly from these most obvious translations in that German-speakers emphasise its experience as a positive emotion– something like nostalgia, yet future-directed– and as such, Scheibe argues that it serves a developmental purpose in orientating people towards life-goals.[153] While Lewis certainly seemed to appreciate this subtlety, in a follow-up study Scheibe and her colleagues investigated understanding and experiences of *Sehnsucht* in Germans and Americans.[154] Of particular relevance here, they noted that although Americans

[150] Tutu 1999, pp. 34-5.
[151] Schiller 1888, pp. 192-3.
[152] Lewis 1955, p. 74; Jasper 2010, p. 223.
[153] Scheibe *et al*. 2007, p. 779, 782.
[154] Scheibe *et al*. 2011, p. 603.

could relate to the concept, they were less likely to spontaneously reflect on such a sense of longing unless asked to do so.[155] Scheibe and her colleagues also concluded that Americans were less likely to use the concept to interpret the unattainability of life goals positively, which in turn offers some support for the effect of cultural concepts on individual experience.[156]

These three examples– love, *ubuntu*, and *Sehnsucht*– all support Lakoff's conclusion that it "does *not* follow from the impossibility of *translation* that *understanding* is impossible."[157] While words can delineate concepts, such that languages which contain them offer their speakers expressive resources that aren't immediately available to speakers of languages lacking such concepts, the key difference seems to be rather that non-speakers have not taken the chance to Name such a concept, not that they cannot. Indeed, the existence of loanwords is proof of the power of languages to adopt wholesale concepts that do not exist in their own conceptual systems. For example, while *Sehnsucht* might remain mostly unknown to English speakers, terms such as *Zeitgeist* and *Schadenfreude* can be used in many contexts without offering a translation.

The interrelation of vocabulary and concepts, then, should not be taken as evidence that languages *form* different cultural worldviews, but should be seen rather along the lines of perceptual skills that develop as part of a speaker's overall initiation into a form of life. Traditionally, such forms of life would largely have mapped onto particular linguistic and cultural communities, yet the point just as equally applies to different subgroups *within* linguistic communities; skiers have at least as many terms for snow as Eskimos, and surfers as many terms for waves as Polynesian mariners. The verbal diversity *within* languages increases as societies become more and more specialised. To take Western philosophy as a particularly salient example– it takes many years of intensive study and training in order to fluently employ such concepts as apperception, externalism, intention, intension, or modular, to say nothing of *eidos*, *res cogitans*, *Zuhandenheit*, or *différance*. As Wittgenstein said, to understand a word is to know how to use it, and so while many languages contain words that do not have ready equivalents in other languages, there is nevertheless no reason in principle why non-speakers could not come to learn how to use such words.[158]

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155 *Ibid*, pp. 615-6.
156 *Ibid*, p. 616.
157 Lakoff 1987, p. 311.
158 Wittgenstein 1974, p. 47.

7.3.5.3 – *Post-conceptual language use*

in which I argue that, since acquiring verbal concepts means that we can cope with them post-conceptually, individuals' second nature 'worlds' will diverge along the lines of the concepts they have acquired.

I have been arguing that the words we speak populate the cultural worlds we inhabit, since by Naming a concept, and attaching a word, we experience it *as* something. Thus our worlds can contain entities such as 'love' and '*Sehnsucht*,' 'traffic lights' and 'shakshuka,' 'spring' and 'Lughnassadh.' Such conceptual worlds are shared, and the entities therein are dependent to greater and lesser degrees on the network of overlapping concepts that are encoded in the language. Yet I have argued that this implies at most a very weak Whorfian effect, firstly because cultural concepts are always in principle translatable– although they may take some work– and secondly because the cultural entities available to a speaker show a similarly great divergence *within* languages as *between* them– and often just as equally require some hard work before we truly 'know how to use them.'

I will close this Section with some brief thoughts on how these conclusions relate to my thesis overall. I will argue that, just as we noetically come to experience words as *things*, so when we fully understand them, we are able to cope with them– that is, we can use them *post-conceptually*, no longer as things, but as tools or equipment (*Zeug*) towards further goals. Thus, language and concepts facilitate an exponential capacity to move within our developed, cultural 'worlds'– to think, abstract, and create.

In Part One, for example, I argued that embodying a skill frees up our conceptual or noetic attention to focus on new elements. Learning to ride a bike, I must concentrate on the different elements of the task– on balancing, pedalling, steering, and so on– with the result that my performance is often clumsy, and I cannot think of anything else. Once I have mastered riding the bike, however, I can turn my attention to navigating the city– I have embodied the physical act of bike-balancing, but I must now devote my noetic attention to negotiating the traffic, the road-signs, and finding my way about town. However, I can likewise come to 'embody' (post-conceptually) this skill set as well– I can know the road rules and my route so well that I follow them 'automatically,' and can devote my noetic attention to another task altogether– thinking about my thesis on the way to work, for example.

However, as I have argued in this and the previous Chapter, the fluid use of language and the act of thinking are themselves tasks that can be approached either

conceptually or post-conceptually. In the previous Chapter, I argued that the *parole parlée* describes the fluent use of language circumspectively towards another goal– that is, post-conceptually. While language does not lose its ability to ultimately point back noetically to something *as* something, we can nevertheless also use it in the service of a different goal. One way we achieve this, I have argued in this Chapter, is through the broadening of our vocabulary. When Naming a new concept and subsuming it under a word, we create a shorthand that allows us to condense and organise more complex concepts more efficiently. Thus, language itself acts as a scaffold to more abstract forms of thought.

This is partially achieved, I have argued, through the surface grammatical structure of our languages. Indeed, Lakoff posits that it is the surface grammatical structure of linguistic thought itself that enables us to think smoothly and 'automatically,' or as I would put it, *post-conceptually*.[159] His description of the differences between grammatical and ungrammatical thought line up significantly with both Dreyfus' non-conceptual/conceptual and Merleau-Ponty's *parole parlée* and *parole parlant* distinctions. Where our grammatical articulation of concepts is 'automatic, unconscious, effortless, fixed, and conventional,' Lakoff argues, our ungrammatical expression is 'pondered, controlled, conscious, effortful, novel, and personal.'[160] As in the phenomenological accounts, there is no judgement here– it is not 'better' to think or speak effortlessly or consciously. The point is that these two modes of using language– reflexively coping, or reflectively thinking– each enable the other, with our post-conceptual automatic fluency freeing up our conscious attention to noetically tease apart (*synthesis* and *diairesis*) more unfamiliar or difficult concepts.

Thus, thinking can also be viewed as a skill that we acquire and practice. The techniques of formal logic, for example, can become second nature (literally, in the McDowellian sense). The experienced thinker need not break down their objects of thought for analysis, but can– analogously to the experienced mechanic– directly see where the problem lies, and what needs to be done. Like the *phronimos*, such a thinker no longer thinks in explicit rules, as they are able to draw on their experience to recognise the solution to the problem– perhaps without being immediately able to explicitly articulate why.

In this Section and its three subsections, I have looked at the effects of cultural

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[159] Lakoff 1987, p. 320.
[160] *Ibid*.

concepts on human thought by discussing my thesis in relation to the Whorfian hypothesis. I have argued that, although differences in surface grammars do force speakers of different languages to emphasise different aspects of experience, such aspects are not invisible to non-speakers, and so do not imply a 'strong' Whorfian thesis of radical cultural incommensurability. On the issue of grammar, my argument that fluent language-use actually *hides* surface grammatical features from conscious awareness offers a potential argument against even a weak Whorfian conclusion, although a different interpretation means that this remains an open empirical question. However, my argument in the second subsection did suggest a weak Whorfian conclusion to the extent that, insofar as our second nature 'worlds' are populated by conceptual entities like 'love' and 'politics,' such entities are only available to those who have acquired them. Since acquiring such concepts, as I argued in the previous Sections, involves being initiated into a shared, cultural community, it is therefore plausible that different cultural worlds will contain different concepts. However, the relative ease of translating such concepts from one language to another– combined with the occasional difficulty of acquiring new concepts within one's own language– speaks against any strong Whorfian conclusions, even while allowing for a weak one, albeit one based more on the lexicon and history of concepts than on the surface grammar of a language.

Finally, I argued that the process of acquiring concepts and hence more distinct second natural worlds is facilitated by complementary processes in both our conceptual/noetic and post-conceptual awareness. We acquire and employ languages and concepts as we acquire skills, and as we become proficient at thinking and speaking, we can use concepts post-conceptually in the service of using new concepts.

Conclusions

In this Chapter I have argued that *noûs* structures our experience grammatically, in the sense of *synthesis* and *diairesis*, and that language is grounded in this capacity to separate and reorganise the elements of experience. I first described how for Heidegger, *noûs* – *vernehmen*– is a 'taking-together-that-takes-apart,' a capacity to separate objects from their properties and to perceive those properties *as* entities that can likewise be recombined. I then argued that this process is described by Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar. Universal Grammar develops with the infant, and I argued that *noesis* describes the logically-prior perceptual faculty which underlies the

possibility of natural language and that enables us to Move and Merge the basic items of linguistic expression. I defended the evolutionary plausibility of this account by emphasising that it co-evolves together with natural language, both in the evolutionary species, but also in the individual. The innateness of Universal Grammar and *noûs* implies only that we are born with a latent capacity to develop this mode of perception. Its development is prompted by our social interaction, and in a similar way, our cultural interactions provide us with the first elements of natural language, which helps develop our noetic faculty, which itself in turn facilitates full language acquisition. This account requires that we rethink our conception of the human being and its relation to language. The human cannot be seen as an isolated individual mind, but must be understood as an embodied being existing in a community. Thus, my account of language's co-evolution with *noesis* cannot be dismissed as circular or internalist, for an individual's acquisition of language marks their initiation into the shared, conceptual world of their community.

However, I finally noted that this initiation into a second natural 'world,' dependent for its existence on a cultural community, may seem to imply linguistic or cultural relativity. I concluded the Chapter, then, with a discussion of the Whorfian hypothesis, and argued that the strong version of the hypothesis is untenable, since we not only share bodily forms with members of different speech communities, but also because linguistic and grammatical differences– while they might emphasise different aspects of experience– do not close off experience, and so the possibility of translation across vastly different languages always remains a possibility. Nevertheless, I did argue that because a community's shared second nature is populated through the process of Naming, and that such a process can also create distinctive cultural entities, there is a sense in which a weak Whorfian hypothesis applies not only across languages, but within them too, as sub-communities develop their own vocabularies to deal with specific concerns. This capacity to Name, I finally suggested, and to experience concepts *as* entities, also allows us to cope with such conceptual entities *post-conceptually*, and hence to refine our vocabularies to speak and think of more and more abstract entities. In a weak sense, therefore, the 'worlds' of different communities and sub-cultures differ from one another, although never incommensurably, as they ultimately derive from a shared embodied experience. Nevertheless, in an important way, at the superficial level this process of abstraction does create a distance between the conceptual second natural world and immersed perceptual experience.

Conclusions

We are arriving at the end of our enquiry into the *logos*, the essence of the *zoon logon echon* or 'rational animal.' Beginning with an exploration the *logos* as it has been discussed in the Dreyfus-McDowell debate, I have sought to distil an understanding of concepts and rationality that can help us better understand the differences as well as the similarities between humans and other animals. My principal concern in this thesis has been to argue that humans are differentiated from other animals through a faculty of linguistically-structured perception– *vernehmen* or *noûs*– through which we directly *perceive* things conceptually. This conceptual form of perception– *noesis*– develops in tandem with our initiation into a second-natural 'world,' and gives us a direct perception of entities disconnected from our practical involvements. We thereby understand these entities *as being* entities. Yet I have also argued that we retain a non-conceptual form of awareness that we share with non-human animals, albeit an awareness that is open to the influence of conceptual experience, and is hence better thought of as *post*-conceptual. The difference between our two forms of awareness suggests that there is a discordance between our different experiences of the world which, together with the intimate connection between *noûs* and self-consciousness, raises questions about our knowledge of reality.

I arrived at this picture by showing how McDowell and Dreyfus broadly agree on two modes through which humans experience entities. These layers or modes of experience, I argued, are interdependent and feed back into one another. The disagreement between Dreyfus and McDowell can, I therefore maintained, be explained as stemming from their respective emphasis of different elements of this broad structure of experience. Understanding the ways these layers interact, then, became the key step toward resolving the debate, as well as understanding human experience.

I argued that we share the bottom layer with non-human animals. I agreed with Dreyfus that this mode of experience should be considered non-conceptual, since it does not involve the experience of an entity *as* an entity, and that it thus requires a translation of content if it is to become the content of reflective thought. I argued that a transition is enacted by Naming something as '*this*,' taking it as an object isolated and independent from our absorbed involvement in a task. Yet importantly, the content-translation of Naming is not a one-way process. For while I argued that humans share non-conceptual experience with other animals, I held that our worlds

are richer than theirs because our capacity to experience entities conceptually also feeds back into our pragmatic coping. Through the acquisition of skills, and the accompanying 'absorption' of norms, we come to navigate our second-nature worlds *post-conceptually*. That is to say, entities which are first encountered noetically can be experienced in a direct, ready-to-hand way. In this way, we directly *live* with concepts *as* things. There is, therefore, no sharp dichotomy between 'mental' concepts that we *think* and 'physical' things we bodily *cope* with. We cope with the *logos* post-conceptually, just as we directly perceive entities *as* entities. Nevertheless, I later argued that the influence of culture in delineating conceptual entities results in a gap that casts doubt on whether our conceptual perception captures the world as it truly is.

I identified the capacity to Name with what Heidegger called *vernehmen*, 'apprehension,' a capacity that he argued is restricted to human beings. I argued for two movements in the Naming process. I argued that *vernehmen*'s intimate connection to language is not primarily rooted in our communicative ability, but rather in how conceptual experience is organised along the structural lines of Universal Grammar. This, I argued, enables the human capacity for abstract, creative thought, since the process of *synthesis* and *diairesis* allows us to detach the experience of a thing from its involved experience in a specific context in a particular time and place. However, I also suggested that this capacity for abstraction is a double-edged sword. Since the noetic structure allows us to think beyond our situation-specific experience, as well to cope with the resulting abstract entity post-conceptually, we live with the constant possibility of a discordance between the second-natural world of our everyday experience, and the source of that experience. I will discuss some implications of this discordance below, but before doing so, it will be useful to review how we got here.

I began in Chapter One by interrogating the Dreyfus-McDowell debate over the extent of our conceptual capacities. I identified as a major problem in that debate a lack of agreement on what the term 'concept' actually refers to. Despite this, I argued that the thinkers agreed in several important respects. Both were committed to extending the idea of cognition beyond linguistic thought; furthermore, I argued that despite McDowell's assertions to the contrary, both acknowledged a change in the content of an experience following the act of reflection. I argued that McDowell's resistance to the idea of such a change, and thus a major source of disagreement, arose from his insistence that an experience's *potential* to become the object of reflection indicates

that it is *already* available in a conceptually-structured form. I argued that this assertion is a form of what Carman calls the 'Scholastic Fallacy'– the "illicit projection of the structure and content of reflection into unreflective experience"– and suggested that McDowell's account actually allows space for the type of experience Dreyfus calls 'non-conceptual coping.' I therefore proposed leaving aside the task of precisely defining 'conceptual' to focus on articulating the three modes of awareness that McDowell and Dreyfus acknowledged– a 'ground floor' of unreflective, situated-responsiveness, a first floor of situation-specific awareness of something as '*this*,' and an upper floor of detached, abstract reasoning. Although Dreyfus and McDowell disagreed on which of and whether these layers should be labelled as conceptual or non-conceptual, as well as exactly where the transition takes place, we nevertheless at that early stage provisionally identified two broad ways of encountering entities.

In Chapter Two, I began to clarify and provide independent support for these layers by undertaking a phenomenology of expert performance, which I argued demonstrated the translation of content that I posited in Chapter One. Engaging with Collins and Evans' account of expertise, I showed that the different forms of expertise they identify– ubiquitous or 'everyday' expertise as well as 'esoteric' expertise, and the expertise of bodily skills as well as cognitive expertises– are united by a dependence on 'tacit knowledge.' This tacit knowledge, I argued, corresponds phenomenologically to the ground floor layer identified in the previous Chapter. The interdependence of this with explicit, verbalised thought revealed a translation of content that supported my account in the previous Chapter of multiple, yet interacting, modes of experience. I then defended this account against Montero's contention that esoteric expertise *requires* explicit, conceptual thought. I argued that her account only reveals that such thought takes place in 'gaps' between non-conceptual coping, and is therefore better taken as evidence for multiple layers of experience operating in tandem. However, expanding on the distinction between 'everyday' and 'esoteric' expertise with reference to Heidegger's concept of *Eigentlichkeit*, I made a distinction between authentic or 'owned' and inauthentic, 'unowned' coping. Unowned coping is characterised by a kind of automaticity that allows explicit thought over the top of it, demonstrating that the two modes of experience operate side-by-side. Owned coping, on the other hand, experienced as *flow*, is focused only in the *moment* of the task, and involves a more integrated form of experience that does not involve the abstracted *logos*.

Thus, as I began Chapter Three, I had distinguished between two broad layers that I

was now beginning to define as conceptual and non-conceptual, with the non-conceptual, ground floor layer describing the unreflective enactment of tacit knowledge, and the conceptual upper storey explicit, reflective thought. The debate thus seemed to centre over the middle, first-floor layer, and in Chapter Three I began to focus on the transition that occurs at this level. I started by unpacking McDowell's claim that human coping differs from animal behaviour because humans employ rational capacities. I argued that the important sense of 'rational' in this case is that captured by the German *Vernunft*, 'faculty of rationality,' as opposed to the *Grund* or reason 'for' an action. I therefore interpreted McDowell's central claim– that the content of an experience is always *suitable* for being exploited by rational capacities– as holding that such content is *immediately* experienced *as* an objective '*this*.' I argued, however, that McDowell's focus overlooked what Heidegger described as a more primordial 'as-structure,' the 'hermeneutic,' which articulates entities within the context of performing a task. Answering objections that the hermeneutic-'*this*' *requires* a cultural world, I argued that we share this more basic as-structure with other animals, although not the 'apophantic' as-structure to which McDowell restricts his discussion. I therefore laid the groundwork for understanding how we are continuous with non-human animals, and also where we diverge.

Having now defined 'conceptual' as taking something *as* an apophantic-'*this*,' I moved on, in Chapter Four, to refine my picture of human coping. I noted that it was an oversimplification to equate human coping with animal behaviour since, as we had already seen, much of our coping involves skills that we acquire through explicit reflection on concepts. Taking *phronesis* as an exemplification of 'authentic practical understanding,' I brought together Dreyfus' account of skill acquisition with McDowell's account of *Bildung* to argue that our initiation into a conceptually-borne 'second nature' involves coming to experience the apophantic *logoi* therein hermeneutically-as equipment or *Zeug*– that is, to experience them non-conceptually, or– to use Taylor's more apt term– *post*-conceptually. That is to say, human coping involves navigating our second-nature worlds in the same, direct way that animals navigate their first nature environments, responding immediately to the solicitations called for by specific situations.

By the end of Part One, then, I had argued that human cognition is comprised of two broad layers– a *post-conceptual* layer where entities are encountered hermeneutically in the enactment of a task, and a *conceptual* layer where they are experienced apophantically-as a context-independent object. In Part Two, I turned my attention

to the conceptual layer, and in particular its interconnection with language.

In Chapter Five, I again followed Heidegger to argue that we perceive entities apophantically *as being* entities through the faculty of *noûs* or *vernehmen*. Heidegger argues that *vernehmen– noesis–* should not be identified with explicit *thinking*, but as a direct *perception* of entities *as* objects, that could thus form the content of conceptual capacities. I argued that the faculty of *noûs* creates a space where in we directly *perceive* entities apophantically, without the need for the breakdown in coping. More precisely, perception (*vernehmen* as *Wahrnehmung*) *itself* 'breaks' the entity out of its ready-to-hand invisibility. Importantly, such entities are experienced *as* wholes in the way they are 'taken to heart,' with no metaphysical claims. We can 'break' an experience into a noetic perception of something *as* a 'book,' a 'pile of books,' or a 'cover,' but we can only hold one experience as a single thing in each noetic moment.

I provided support for this contention in Chapter Six by exploring two complementary empirical examples. Firstly, I discussed Tomasello's finding that apes are incapable of declarative pointing, something which becomes even more significant in light of the fact that human infants develop that capacity spontaneously as they begin to acquire language. I then expanded on Merleau-Ponty's analysis of Schneider's visual agnosia to argue that Schneider suffered an impairment in his capacity to *vernehmen*. I argued that Schneider, having lost his capacity to 'point' even while retaining his ability to 'grasp,' was able to respond only hermeneutically to the pragmatic entities of his post-conceptual experience. Taken together, I argued, these two cases thereby demonstrated the deep interconnection of *noûs*, grammatical language, and the capacity to take an entity apophantically *as being* an independent object.

In Chapter Seven, I argued that we should understand noetic perception as fundamentally *linguistic*, in that such experiences are grammatically structured. Heidegger calls *vernehmen* a 'taking-together-that-takes-apart,' arguing that it is grounded in what Aristotle called *synthesis* and *diairesis*, the process of pointing out entities and recontextualising them. I made sense of this by relating it to Chomsky's Universal Grammar, wherein elements of an experience are organised such that they can be expressed as the moveable elements of natural language. Coupled together with my argument that we can noetically carve up the world or take entities 'to heart' in different ways, all the while experiencing them *as* things, my account therefore suggested a disconnect between our experience of a thing conceptually *as* a thing, and

its underlying source in non-conceptual experience. However, I argued that such a conclusion does not lead to the kind of deeply sceptical internalist or coherentist arguments that worried McDowell. Firstly, our embodiment and shared first nature means that ultimately many of our concepts are grounded in a shared bodily experience of coping. Secondly, the more abstract concepts we acquire are the result of our initiation into a shared, second-natural cultural world, which forms the niche in which our language and culture develops. However, there nevertheless remains a degree of contingency in the way different cultures carve up their conceptual worlds, although I argued that this does not imply a strong Whorfian claim of incommensurability, since translation and conceptual acquisition remains a possibility both between linguistic communities, and between different communities within a single language. The process of the post-conceptual embodiment of concepts thus forms a scaffold by which we can carve up the world in increasingly rich and diverse ways, although greater divergences require greater efforts to translate them. Even so, the potential for cultural variation in forming conceptual entities, together with the noetic capacity to carve out entities in terms of what they are not, means that our 'world' of conceptual experience is peculiarly human.

* * *

Through *noesis* we directly perceive something *as being* a *thing*, an entity. Heidegger considered only *vernehmen* to be really Perception or *Wahrnehmung*– that is, 'true-taking,' taking as true. We should recall that truth (*Wahrheit*), for Heidegger, should be understood as *aletheia*, as revealing or unconcealing. In the enactment of *noesis*, we own an experience of ourselves *as selves* taking an entity *as* an entity, brought into the light of *aletheia* from the shadowy totality of its equipmentality (*Zeugkeit*).[1] In this *moment* of Perception, between absorbed coping and abstract thought, we have a direct contact with entities *as* entities, of the kind that McDowell argues for in *Mind and World*. Here we find the 'friction' that keeps our conceptual 'space of reasons' in contact with the source of the *logos*, a contact that is a direct appearance that things are 'thus and so.' In the *moment*, therefore, we are truly in touch with the world.

Aletheia is enacted by the roaming eye of *vernehmen*, with entities revealed from one angle as *this* and simultaneously concealed in their other aspects. But at the level of

[1] Graham Harman (2002) reads a similar thought into Heidegger in his book on *Zuhandenheit*, to which I owe some early inspiration, although our final conclusions differ in important ways.

the *logos*, 'truth' also becomes a matter of whether an experience conforms to the generalised concept. As we think beyond the *moment*, the situation-specific point of view is taken as general and the revealed entity is experienced as timeless, placeless, and unchanging. The grammatical structure wherein we *think* an entity beyond the *moment*, and which allows us to think expansively and creatively, also freezes those entities into the particular angle of their encounter. Thus, even if we see the *thing*, we take it as the *logos*– an abstracted image.

By focusing on the *logos*, the potential arises for a discordance between our thought and our experience. Thinking solely within a 'space of reasons,' populated by *logoi*, we take the world as a collection of fixed, homogenous entities– 'forgetting' the differences, as Nietzsche put it, in the process of conceptualisation.[2] This tree is the same as that tree, this friend is the same person as last year, this thought is a 'wrong thought'; we take processes as entities, which are separated in time and space and interact in a dance of cause and effect. Through *noesis*– grammatical perception– we create a world of things.

Yet this discordance is kept in check in the *moment* in which our two modes of experience intersect, where our self-awareness is co-extensive with coping, as we find in the *eigentlich* performance of tasks in the *flow*. The capacity to own our experience separates us on the one hand from other animals– who, while they cope smoothly in their environments, never own their experience but always act as '*das Tier*'– and on the other, from the distanced, abstract thinking that connects *logoi* to other *logoi*. Yet such a *moment* is fragile. We slip easily and frequently in either direction, into habitual responsiveness or into explicit thinking. Therefore, while we always have the possibility of connecting directly to experience, we slip easily out of such a connection, instead taking the abstract *logoi* as things. We then exist in a world of language, distanced from the entities themselves.

* * *

I hope in this thesis to have offered a convincing theory of the interrelation of language, thought, and human experience. Yet at the end, this work comprises only a beginning. In order to establish the central thesis, I have neglected several fertile paths, and many new questions arise as further implications from this work.

[2] Nietzsche 2006, p. 117.

There are several potential interdisciplinary connections that I have been unable to explore in this thesis. There is, for example, a rapidly growing literature in philosophy and cognitive science that is investigating the neural correlates of conscious perception, action, and experience. While I am cautiously sceptical of neuro-reductionism, I find it significant that the functions associated with what I have called the noetic– including the 'pointing' mode, episodic memory, and grammatical processing– are centred around parts of the brain– the cortex and especially the pre-frontal cortex– that are almost peculiarly human. The inhibition of these brain areas also produces states of awareness that are radically different from our 'ordinary' modes of cognition, and which bear more than a passing phenomenal resemblance to *flow* states. While these correlations are not conclusive– and without a specialism in neuroscience, I cannot alone pursue them further– the consistency of my thesis with current knowledge of the brain is encouraging, and suggests an angle for future, interdisciplinary work. Furthermore, the idea of multiple cognitive systems working in tandem supports my assertion that our conceptual and non-conceptual forms of awareness rarely, if ever, function in isolation from one another.

These correlations also have the potential to inform our thinking on what it means to be a *self*. I noted in Chapter One Sartre's observation that he 'can't help finding himself' in reflective thought.[3] Since then, we have also seen the entanglement of *noesis* and self-consciousness manifest, such as in the above-mentioned activities of 'pointing' and episodic memory or envisioning the future. Thus, there remains a longer story to tell about the links between our sense of self-as-ego and the linguistic-grammatical structure I have argued characterises *noûs*, for my account seems to imply that a sense of self is inextricable from experiencing the world linguistically. Indeed, one traditional translation of *noûs* is 'mind' or 'intellect,' and the features I have ascribed to it conform to a traditional picture of the mind that conceives it as a faculty that takes objects as what Kant called an apperceptive synthesis, with content expressed in the judgements of a self-conscious knower. There remains much more work that can be done connecting these two pictures and exploring the entanglement of self-consciousness with the consciousness of objects *as* objects. This itself also opens further questions about the form of self-awareness present in beings lacking noetic awareness, be they instances of our own experience, or pre-linguistic humans, or other creatures.

[3] *Supra*, p. 26.

My thesis has suggested not only an 'abyss' between humans and animals, however, but also a gap between our own modes of experiencing something either post-conceptually (that is, hermeneutically-as something) or conceptually (or apophantically-as *being* something). Dreyfus has long argued that classical artificial intelligence programmes were doomed to failure because they could not build machines that could deal with non-conceptual knowledge, being typically designed to function by explicitly representing the world. Dreyfus' once controversial view has now arguably been vindicated both by the abandonment of classical AI, and the initial successes of embodied AI systems which seem to replicate animal-like flexible responsiveness. One further consequence of my thesis, however, would provide a basis for criticising this approach. I would argue that while such a strategy, focusing on hermeneutic experience, could thereby instantiate smooth-coping in a machine, it would at best replicate a very intelligent animal. *Human* intelligence, on my view, requires the capacity to take something *apophantically*. The link between the apophantic and specifically *grammatical* language offers a clue towards building such an intelligence.

In the purely philosophical sphere, several paths extending from the conclusions I have reached here remain open to follow. For example, there is potential to enter debates on consciousness by exploring the parallels between *noesis* and access-consciousness– between *vernehmen* and attention– and contrasting these with the form of awareness involved in circumspectively taking something hermeneutically. I have also mentioned parallels between my account of deictic triangulation and Davidson's account of triangulation. While Davidson and I agree on the external nature of concepts and the intersubjective origin of language, my focus on perception and particularly my distinction between conceptual and non-/post-conceptual perception gives a role to the subject that thinkers such as Malpas have argued that Davidson rejects.[4] This position offers an alternative criticism of McDowell to the one I have put forth here, with quite different epistemological consequences. While I have not had the space to explore it in this work, an engagement and comparison of Davidson's intersubjective approach with my own could prove a fruitful path for future research.

Finally, while I have drawn extensively on Heidegger throughout this work, I have used his thought primarily as a source of concepts to better understand the issues at

[4] Malpas 2011, p. 261.

stake in debates over the relation of language and thought to action. In dialogue with Dreyfus, Haugeland, McNeill, and Merleau-Ponty, among others, I have revised and extended some of Heidegger's arguments in order to apply them to the contexts I have discussed. In so doing, I have diverged, to greater or lesser degrees, from many orthodox interpretations of his work, especially those of English-speaking Continental philosophers. Having nevertheless found fruitful applications of his philosophy, I have thereby laid foundations for an immanent critique of Heidegger's work. While I believe my reading has been sufficiently rigorous to support the task of this thesis, a more explicit confrontation with orthodox readings of Heidegger remains a project I have yet to attempt.

* * *

Language creates our world. We live within a second nature that we acquire as we develop the ability to perceive the world grammatically, via our initiation into a language and culture. As *humans*, we are inseparable from the world we develop (*die Welt, die wir bilden*) and that we navigate both conceptually and post-conceptually. It is in this sense that we are the *zoon logon echon*, having a *logos* which extends from our abstract thought into our practical coping. And in this sense, we find an abyss between ourselves and other animals. Through the capacity to Perceive– to *vernehmen* objects *as* objects– we understand ourselves *as* subjects, as selves. Taking the world as world, we are confronted by the possibility of being beyond it. With this comes the imperative to *own* our actions, to merge with the world, and experience our actions beyond subject and object. The linguistic consciousness that forms our separation is also our way back to ourselves, as we aim towards the fusion of the *moment*.

Geschrieben steht: »Im Anfang war das Wort!«
Hier stock ich schon! Wer hilft mir weiter fort?
Ich kann das Wort so hoch unmöglich schätzen,
Ich muß es anders übersetzen,
Wenn ich vom Geiste recht erleuchtet bin.
Geschrieben steht: Im Anfang war der Sinn.
Bedenke wohl die erste Zeile,
Daß deine Feder sich nicht übereile!
Ist es der Sinn*, der alles wirkt und schafft?*
Es sollte stehn: Im Anfang war die Kraft*!*

Doch, auch indem ich dieses niederschreibe,
Schon warnt mich was, daß ich dabei nicht bleibe.
Mir hilft der Geist! Auf einmal seh ich Rat
Und schreibe getrost: Im Anfang war die Tat*!*

~ Goethe, *Faust, Erster Teil,* Kap. III ~

It is written: 'In the beginning was the Word!'
Already I have to stop! Who'll help me on?
It's impossible to put such trust in the Word!
I must translate it some other way
If I am truly enlightened by the spirit.
It is written: 'In the beginning was the Thought!'
Think hard of that first line,
Make sure your pen does not outrun itself!
Is it the Thought that moves and creates everything?
It should be: 'In the beginning was the Power!'
Yet even as I write it down,
Already something warns me not to keep it.
The spirit helps me! All at once I see the answer
And write confidently: 'In the beginning was the Deed!'

~ Goethe, *Faust, Part One,* Ch. 3 ~
(Randall Jarrell, trans.)

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